

ALTERNITY

Science Fiction Roleplaying Game

TSR11648

# DARK MATTER

accessory

TM

## XENIFORMS

JD Wiker

Aliens, Demons & Aberrations





ALTERNITY. Science Fiction Roleplaying Game

# DARK•MATTER

adventure

# XENOFORMS

ALIENS, DEMONS,  
AND ABERRATIONS

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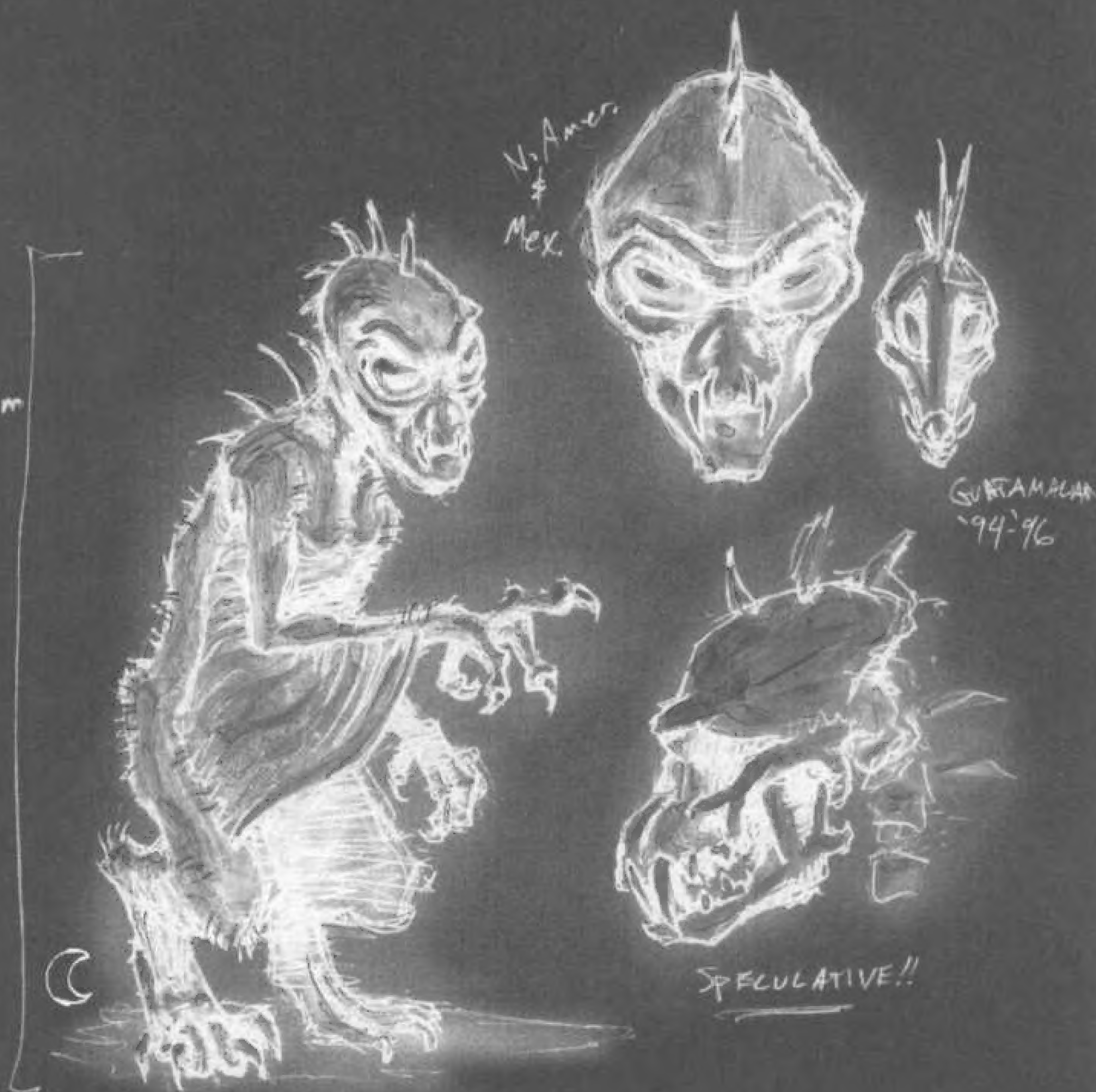
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Based on the ALTERNITY rules created by Bill Slavicsek and Richard Baker.



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# Introduction

## A Memo from the Division Supervisor



June 23, 2001

From: Gheorghe Zamfirescu, Archives Division Supervisor  
To: All Agents  
Re: Xenofoms

All:

Dr. Nakami has directed me to remind you of the policies concerning the disposition of specimens, particularly as they relate to organic material. The director and I both feel that certain elements of the Institute have of late lost sight of the greater goals of this organization, insofar as cryptozoological studies are concerned.

**Observation:** The first duty of any agent involved in cryptozoological studies for the Hoffmann Institute is observation. Without a clear understanding of the motivations and capabilities of a xenofom, it is inadvisable for agents to proceed with a more in-depth investigation as regards the subject.

**Documentation:** To ensure that all agents involved in the study have access to the same information, it is imperative that observing agents make full reports, and that inconsistencies between individual reports be thoroughly researched and rectified. As even a slight omission can result in serious injury, this aspect of our work is of highest priority.

**Contact:** When necessary, agents should be prepared to initiate contact with xenofoms, particularly those that display signs of both intelligence and social behavior. Obviously a language barrier may exist, and agents are urged to remember that a gesture of peace in one culture may be construed as a gesture of war in another. The reverse is also true. Agents should exercise extreme caution. In other cases, the xenofom may be possessed of only animal intelligence. These are to be treated no less carefully, as creatures of such low intellect are often motivated by such primal instincts as sustenance and self-defense. Agents are advised not to interfere with either activity, except of course where the safety of another agent or innocent civilian is involved.

**Physical Evidence:** The primary goal of the Chicago Specimen Collection is the acquisition of physical evidence of the existence of xenofoms. To this end, agents are authorized by as high an authority as Director Nakami to pursue any reasonable method of obtaining tangible proof of the existence of unknown life forms, including but not limited to the delivery of a preserved corpse. Obviously this is not always possible without compromising the security of the Hoffmann Institute or the safety of its operatives. With this in mind, agents are also authorized to collect genetic samples, including but not limited to blood and tissue samples, bodily excretions and secretions, (clear) photographs, plaster castings, and the like. Standard evidence kits generally include all of the materials necessary to obtain and preserve such samples. Additional kits are available via requisition.

In closing, I would like to remind all agents that we are not in the business of "monster-hunting," as some of you are prone to refer to our work. We provide a vital service to the Hoffmann Institute, which in turns provides a vital service to all mankind.

GZ

cc:IN, nb



## What You Need to Play

Although the statistics given here use the ALTERNITY® science fiction game system, this product can be adapted to any modern conspiracy/horror system with which you would like to use it. To use the entries as written you will need the *ALTERNITY Player's Handbook* and the *DARK•MATTER Campaign Setting*. The *ALTERNITY Gamemaster Guide* will also prove extremely useful.

## Presentation

Although cryptids (literally, "hidden animals") are regularly researched by agencies more mundane than the Hoffmann Institute, the vast majority are innocuous curiosities. Into this category fall such beasts as the thylacine or the coelacanth—fascinating cryptozoological specimens both, but about as threatening to paranormal investigators as housecats and goldfish.

This book features something a bit more dangerous: xenoforms, the kind of creatures that an agent may be required to shoot with a gun rather than a camera. This is not to say that the heroes should try to kill every creature they encounter, but that if the mission called for simply taking photographs and plaster casts, the Institute (or other organization) wouldn't be sending agents as highly trained as the heroes. In many cases, simply gathering information is enough. But if things go awry, the xenoform in question is liable to present more of a threat than the run-of-the-mill cryptozoologist can handle.

The entries in this book represent the analyses of decades' worth of investigations into paranormal manifestations, both of natural (if unusual) creatures, and supernatural ones as well. Agents should be warned: this information is not necessarily 100% accurate! If it were, there would be very little reason to send agents out after more data.

## Categories

The creatures in this book are categorized by origin. A creature native to the Congo, for example, will be listed under "Africa." Creatures that do not necessarily belong to any Earthly geographical location are listed as "Extradimensional," "Extraphysical," "Extratemporal," or "Extraterrestrial" as their origins dictate.

Each category is subdivided into entries for individual creatures. Some creatures will not be listed by their proper names if there are multiple similar creatures in other locations.

## Game Data

The game statistics provided in this book represent an average specimen of the creature in question. Unusual individuals may be larger, faster, stronger, or smarter, and the Gamemaster is encouraged to alter the particulars of the creatures as needed.

**Ability Scores:** All creatures are given a rough rating in the six ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Will, and Personality) to approximate their capabilities on a human scale. You may roll the scores randomly using the die range provided, or you can use the provided default values.

For creatures that are strictly low- and high-order animals (Intelligence scores of 1–2 and 3–4, respectively), the parenthetical Ability Score values and ranges for Intelligence and Personality are preceded by the word "Animal." In such cases, the given numbers represent how the creature's abilities compare to those of other animals.

**Durability:** The amount of punishment a typical member of this species can withstand—numbers for fatigue, stun, wound, and mortal points separated by slashes. A creature's durability rating is usually tied to its Constitution, although exceptionally bulky or tough creatures may have better ratings than their Constitution scores suggest.

**Move:** The creature's combat movement rates. Often these rates are different from that indicated by a creature's Strength and Dexterity due to its body structure, metabolism, or other factors.

**Reaction Score:** If you want to dispense with die rolls to determine a xenoform's action check result, use its reaction score instead. The degree of success (Marginal, Ordinary, or Good) indicates the first phase in which the creature can act, and the number following the slash is how many actions it receives per round.

**Psionic Energy Points:** If the creature has psionic abilities, its maximum number of psionic energy points is given here.

**FX Energy Points:** If it uses FX abilities, the creature's maximum number of FX energy points appears here.

**Action Check:** The creature's action check score. These numbers are not always based on its Dexterity and Intelligence, as is the case for heroes; some mindless creatures may be very swift.

**#Actions:** The number of actions the creature receives per round. Again, this figure isn't always derived from the xenoform's Will and Constitution scores. It's more a reflection of fighting instinct.

**Last Resorts:** The number of last resort points a creature is entitled to have, usually based on its Personality score. This category applies only to subsentient and sentient creatures.

**Attacks:** The creature's natural attacks are listed here using the following format:

| Mode | Skill Score | Damage (O/G/A) | Type |
|------|-------------|----------------|------|
| Claw | 16/8/4      | 2d4s/2d6w/d4m  | LI/O |



**Defenses:** The creature's resistance modifiers versus melee attacks (Strength-based) and ranged attacks (Dexterity-based) appear here, as well as its natural armor (if any). For sentient and subsentient creatures, this section also includes Intelligence and Will resistance modifiers that may come into play if encounter skills are employed against the creature.

**Skills:** Any skills a xeniform possesses are noted here. Even though their Intelligence scores might not technically permit them to have the number of skills attributed to them, many creatures of animal-level intelligence have innate physical attributes that correspond to particular skills. The numbers in brackets following each skill are the skill scores for a typical creature of the species in question. If a particular creature has Ability Scores different from the ones given for a typical specimen, any skill scores associated with those Ability Scores must be adjusted accordingly.

## Animal Attacks

The average predatory animal always follows a specific style of attack. Some are better at biting, others at clawing, and still others are best at strangling their prey. But nearly every creature of at least animal intellect understands that rendering the opponent helpless greatly facilitates victory. To this end, xeniforms often use overpowering attacks—and animal xeniforms rely on such attacks almost exclusively.

Most battles can be simulated with the rules for overpowering attacks, as outlined in Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action in the *Gamemaster Guide* and represented here.

## Overpowering

Sometimes, the best move is to grab and restrain the enemy. To overpower, a combatant makes an attack skill check with a +1 step penalty.

Each ally who helps with an overpower attempt in the same phase provides a –1 step bonus to the hero's skill check. For example, if a trio of beasts are trying to take down a hero, the attack roll is based on the toughest creature's Unarmed Attack–*brawl* score with a +1 step penalty, but the other two creatures move that to a –1 step bonus.

The Gamemaster can choose to set a realistic limit on the number of attackers who can surround a single target, given limitations of space and the size of the target and attackers.

If the overpower attack is successful, the attacker or attackers have a *hold* on the target equal to the degree of success of the attack. The held character suffers a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty to skill checks while held. For example, a Good attack result indicates a Good hold—the held character has a +2 step penalty to all actions.

Once a target is held, the attacker or attackers have a few choices of what to do next.

- **Improve the Hold:** The holding character can attempt to acquire a better hold in later phases but risks losing his or her hold altogether with a failed attack. An improved hold results in an increased penalty to the target, as noted above.
- **Bum's Rush:** With a second overpower attack, a held character can be dragged, pushed, or generally moved from where he or she stands.
- **Maul:** A held character can be strangled or struck with a normal skill check for normal unarmed damage; if the attack fails, the hold is lost. This is a favored attack form for many creatures.
- **Takedown:** A second successful overpower attack maintains the hold and puts the held character on the ground, which adds penalties for being prone (+2 step penalty to his or her attacks, –2 step bonus to attackers). Characters with the *defensive martial arts* skill can attempt a takedown without first gaining a hold.
- **Pin:** A held character on the ground can be pinned with a third overpower attack. These three overpower attacks must be made in consecutive phases during which the attacker can act. A pinned character can't free him- or herself until the attacker or attackers choose to allow it.

Breaking a hold requires a skill check using Unarmed Attack–*brawl* or *power martial arts*, Acrobatics–*defensive martial arts*, or a feat check using Strength or Dexterity. If successful, the hero escapes the hold; on an Amazing success, the hero can immediately act in the same phase.

## Creature Names

For Gamemasters who wish to create their own xeniforms or adapt an existing creature to a specific locale, the following naming conventions might prove handy.

If a creature cannot be identified as a specific type of animal (such as a dog or a bull), but it:

- appears to be an animal of some sort, it is a “beast” (e.g., “the Beast of Bodmin Moor”);
- appears to be larger than a cow, it is a “monster” (e.g., “the Flathead Lake Monster”);
- appears to be a bipedal humanoid, it is a “man” (e.g., “the Abominable Snowman”);
- was originally sighted before AD 1850, it is most likely called a “devil” (e.g., “the Jersey Devil”);
- is always sighted in the same geographical location, the location's name is part of the creature's name (e.g., “the Queensland Tiger,” “Champ, the Lake Champlain Monster,” or “Momo, the Missouri Monster”).

These guidelines exclude creatures whose names translate to native-language words that describe what they do. Some examples include the “kongamato” (“breaker of boats”),



"emela-ntouka" ("killer of elephants"), and "El Chupacabras" ("the goat-sucker").

## Running Xenofoms

Even when they are not intelligent creatures, xenofoms are not necessarily stupid. Though there are exceptions to the rule, xenofoms do not go out of their way to attack other creatures. They do not attack when they have no advantage. They do not fight to the death.

All xenofoms have an agenda of some sort, even if it only amounts to "survive." It is the Gamemaster's job when portraying the creature to the players to keep this agenda in mind. Is winning a battle against numerous foes as important to the creature as fulfilling its agenda? Does the creature have an ego that interferes with its instincts? What does it take for the creature to forego its agenda?

Obviously, some xenofoms interact violently with the heroes because it is in their nature to do so. By the same token, some xenofoms perpetrate acts of cruelty and destruction because their nature is essentially evil. A demon, for example, needs no excuse to take someone's life, whereas a werewolf might attempt to do so only to satisfy its hunger. The Gamemaster should take care not to portray a xenofom as evil simply because it is opposed to the heroes.

The Gamemaster should also take care not to confuse evil with stupidity. No matter how much a demon wants to butcher a helpless victim, it will not ignore an obvious ambush in order to do so. If a creature is as intelligent as the heroes, the

Gamemaster should not allow it to make mistakes the heroes wouldn't make.

When presenting xenofoms to the players, the Gamemaster would do well to remember that the average creature rarely holds still long enough for the heroes to get a good look. In other words, the players don't need to know that their opponent is "a large catlike beast, 4 meters long, with black fur and glowing green eyes" when "a large, dark shape, moving on all fours" provides a greater sense of dread.

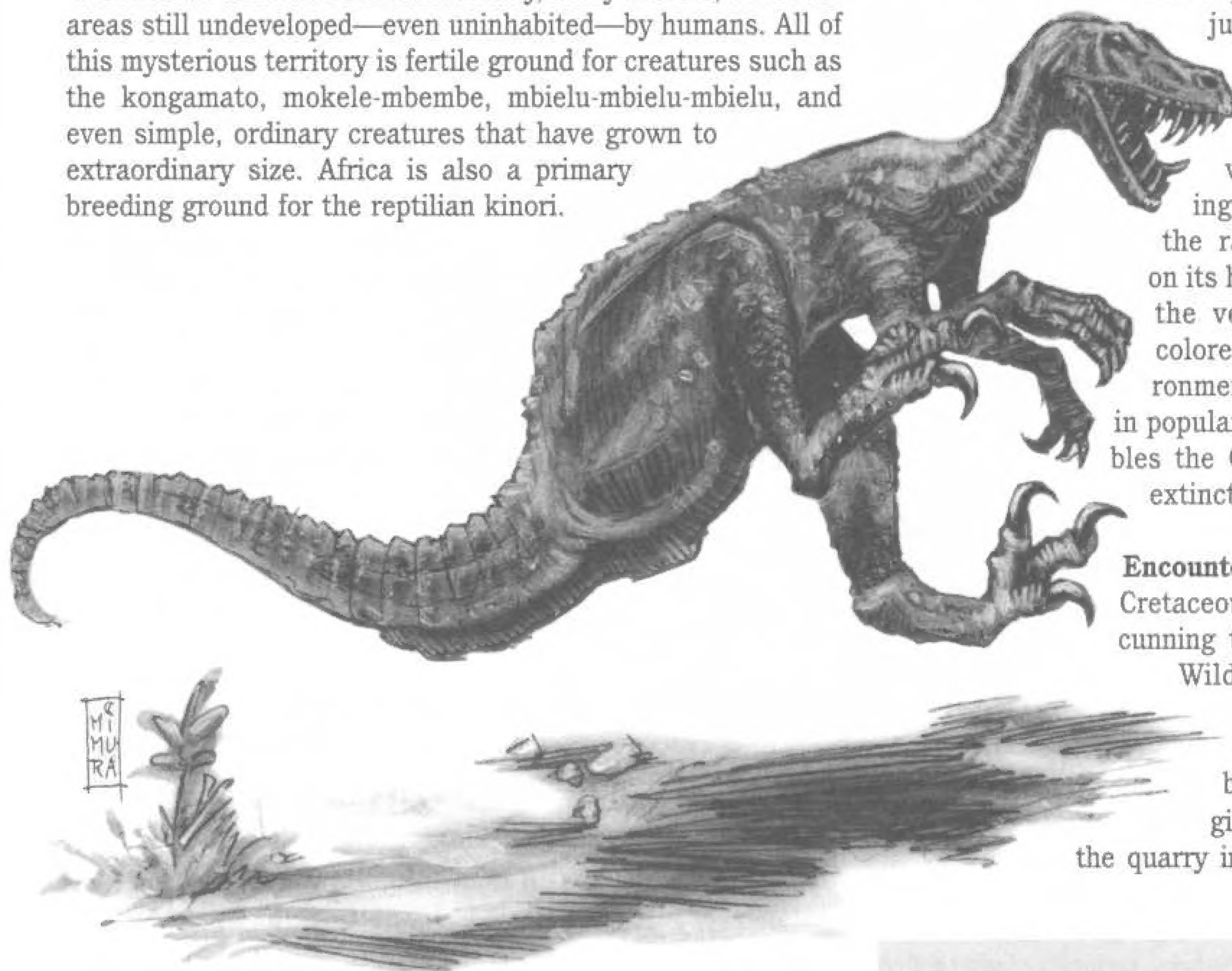
Further, even when the players know their heroes are facing a sasquatch, the Gamemaster should not simply identify it as such. The most ominous presentation creates doubt in the player's mind—and thus the hero's. Was that large, hairy shape really a Bigfoot? If it wasn't, will treating it like one be a fatal mistake?

Just as the Gamemaster hides the actual identity of a xenofom, it is important to obscure the thing's origin. Even when the beast lies dead at the heroes' feet and they are analyzing samples of its genetic material, the Gamemaster should only identify its origin in the form of clues. A creature normally found only in the wilds of Tibet is certainly not wearing a label that says so—though its stomach contents may include bits of a plant that only grows in the Himalayas. The hemoglobin of the luminous humanoid contains unidentified elements. The residue left behind by the creature smells vaguely of sulfur. Such clues should quickly lead astute investigators to the creature's origin and habitat without the Gamemaster's explicit direction.



# Africa

The African continent still holds many, many secrets, with vast areas still undeveloped—even uninhabited—by humans. All of this mysterious territory is fertile ground for creatures such as the kongamato, mokele-mbembe, mbielu-mbielu-mbielu, and even simple, ordinary creatures that have grown to extraordinary size. Africa is also a primary breeding ground for the reptilian kinori.



**Description:** A Congoraptor stands just over 2 meters tall but is actually something like 4 meters long from tip to tail.

Its snakelike snout is filled with needlelike, backward-pointing teeth—perfect companions for the razor-sharp, sickle-shaped claws on its hind legs. Like its smaller cousin, the velociraptor, the Congoraptor is colored to blend in with its jungle environment. (The “velociraptor” depicted in popular films much more closely resembles the Congoraptor than the real, now-extinct dinosaur.)

**Encounter:** Like the velociraptors of the Cretaceous period, Congoraptors employ cunning tactics to bring down their prey. Wild Congoraptors generally favor herding prey toward the rest of the pack, while kinori-trained beasts pursue a variety of strategies. The most common is chasing the quarry into a cul-de-sac, where it can be

## Congoraptor

‘I don’t know if I can keep this up.’  
 ‘Me too. But if we can make it to the clearing, we’re safe.’  
 ‘That’s still 50 clicks away . . .’  
 ‘Then we’d better get moving.’  
 ‘Should we, you know, bury Andy?’  
 ‘. . . No.’  
 ‘No?’  
 ‘I’m thinking that if we leave him here, those things might stop to eat him. It’ll buy us two, three minutes—if we’re lucky.’

The Congoraptor is a dromaeosaurid dinosaur recently discovered by the kinori and enslaved by the blackscales. Named for the country where humans first encountered them in the year 2000, Congoraptors are rapidly becoming the shock troops of the modern kinori—fast, silent, and efficient killers.

## Congoraptor Game Data

|                                  |         |                          |                    |
|----------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| STR 8                            | (2d4+3) | INT 4                    | (Animal 9 or d4+7) |
| DEX 12                           | (d6+9)  | WIL 10                   | (d4+8)             |
| CON 8                            | (d6+5)  | PER 2                    | (Animal 6 or d4+4) |
| Durability: 8/8/4/4              |         | Action check: 13+/12/6/3 |                    |
| Move: sprint 40, run 30, walk 10 |         | #Actions: 2              |                    |
| Reaction score: Ordinary/2       |         |                          |                    |

### Attacks

|            |        |                   |      |
|------------|--------|-------------------|------|
| Bite       | 12/6/3 | d4+2w/d6+2w/d4m   | LI/O |
| Claws (×2) | 14/7/3 | d4+1w/d4+3w/d4+1m | LI/O |

### Defenses

+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 Armor (Ordinary): d4 (LI), d4–2 (HI), d4–1 (En)

### Skills

Athletics [8]–*jump* [12]; Unarmed [8]; Acrobatics [12]–*dodge* [13]; Stealth [12]–*hide* [14], *shadow* [16], *sneak* [14]; Tactics [4]–*infantry* [8]; Awareness [10]–*intuition* [12], *perception* [12]; Investigate [10]–*search* [12], *track* [12].



quickly slaughtered. The Congoraptors pounce in and out of reach, attacking and withdrawing to keep it disoriented. Another common method involves chasing the prey around a big circle, while a larger circle keeps pace to prevent it from trying to double back or escape. When the prey is exhausted, the raptors strike.

A Congoraptor attacks much as a velociraptor did: feet first, attempting to secure purchase with its great hooked claws. This attack style allows it to combine a takedown maneuver with its initial overpower attack instead of the normal follow-up attack. Up to two Congoraptors can attack a human-sized target at the same time to offset the penalty for the overpower attempt; after a successful hold, the raptor attempts a pin maneuver. Once satisfied the prey isn't going anywhere, it tears out chunks with its jaws while its claws rip into the target, inflicting more damage. (Treat the bite as a normal attack, and the claws as a maul.) The attack doesn't end until either the Congoraptor, or more likely the prey, is dead.

**Habitat/Society:** There are currently fewer than twenty wild Congoraptors in existence. Considerably smaller and weaker before the kinori magically enhanced them, they would have probably died out within the century (if human encroachment didn't kill them off first). Wild Congoraptors usually form small packs, numbering five to ten, and patrol a specific territory. Currently, those territories are fairly small, existing entirely within the borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The kinori have just as much difficulty tracking Congoraptors down as humans do, though captive breeding is starting to show promise. Those raptors encountered by humans so far have been part of the "first batch" to undergo training as war-beasts. The kinori are quite pleased with the results.

A female Congoraptor generally lays a clutch of up to five eggs, which she promptly buries in the mud before rejoining the pack. The eggs lie forgotten until they hatch six weeks later, at which point the adult raptors, perhaps recognizing the scent of the young, accept them into the group. Many eggs do not last that long, though. Prized as a delicacy by various predators—including the mountain gorilla, the Congoraptors' greatest enemy—a given egg is lucky to survive the incubation period. Fortunately for the Congoraptors, the kinori's breeding efforts will probably ensure the survival of the species.

The kinori use Congoraptors mostly as hunting and raiding beasts—for now. The raptors are far less effective at the former, though, for they have a hard time learning not to immediately devour everything they catch. In all likelihood, the kinori will abandon this avenue of training and use the Congoraptors purely for raiding human encampments. Once the beasts are plentiful enough, the kinori may begin relocating them to other bases throughout Arabia, Africa, and India—perhaps even in urbanized areas. This could be a major step toward the kinori's goal of reclaiming the planet Earth from the humans who rule it now.

**Adventure Hook:** After the heroes clean out a nest of kinori in Uganda, a violent coup forces them to detour into the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Working their way through the forests toward the Congo River, the heroes slowly become aware of an unseen enemy stalking them in the night. Some investigation shows that they have run into more kinori, which have some sort of giant bipedal reptile with them.

The heroes have to escape the jungle as quickly as possible. The closest center of civilization is Kisangani (Stanleyville), about 200 kilometers away. The heroes can arrange for an evacuation helicopter to meet them at a clearing about 50 kilometers away, but that's still a day's hard march, with vicious monsters dogging their every step.

Do the heroes try for the chopper? Or do they stand and fight? The heroes have automatic weapons against the kinori's spears, but the kinori have their silent, lethal Congoraptors to even the odds.

## Flying Snake

'Is this the boy who saw the flying snake?'

'Yes. His name is Moukib. I will translate for you. The giant snake . . . it fell from the sky . . . he watched it crush and eat a goat . . . then it crawled into a hole in the cliff.'

'Does he think he can show us where this is?'

'He says yes, but you should wait until the lizard men leave first.'

'Wait—lizard men?'

The flying snake of India, *Chrysopelea paradisi*, has a much larger cousin in Africa. The creature was first sighted in the 1930s when it attacked a flock of sheep. Though it has made few appearances since, local herders who lose a few sheep under mysterious circumstances always know what is responsible—and move their flocks to other pastures.

**Description:** The African flying snake reaches lengths of 8 meters but is otherwise indistinguishable from common serpents. Its scales are dark brown with widely spaced black striations. Because it is not venomous, the flying snake's teeth are needlelike and arranged in a sort of horseshoe pattern; it has no fangs.

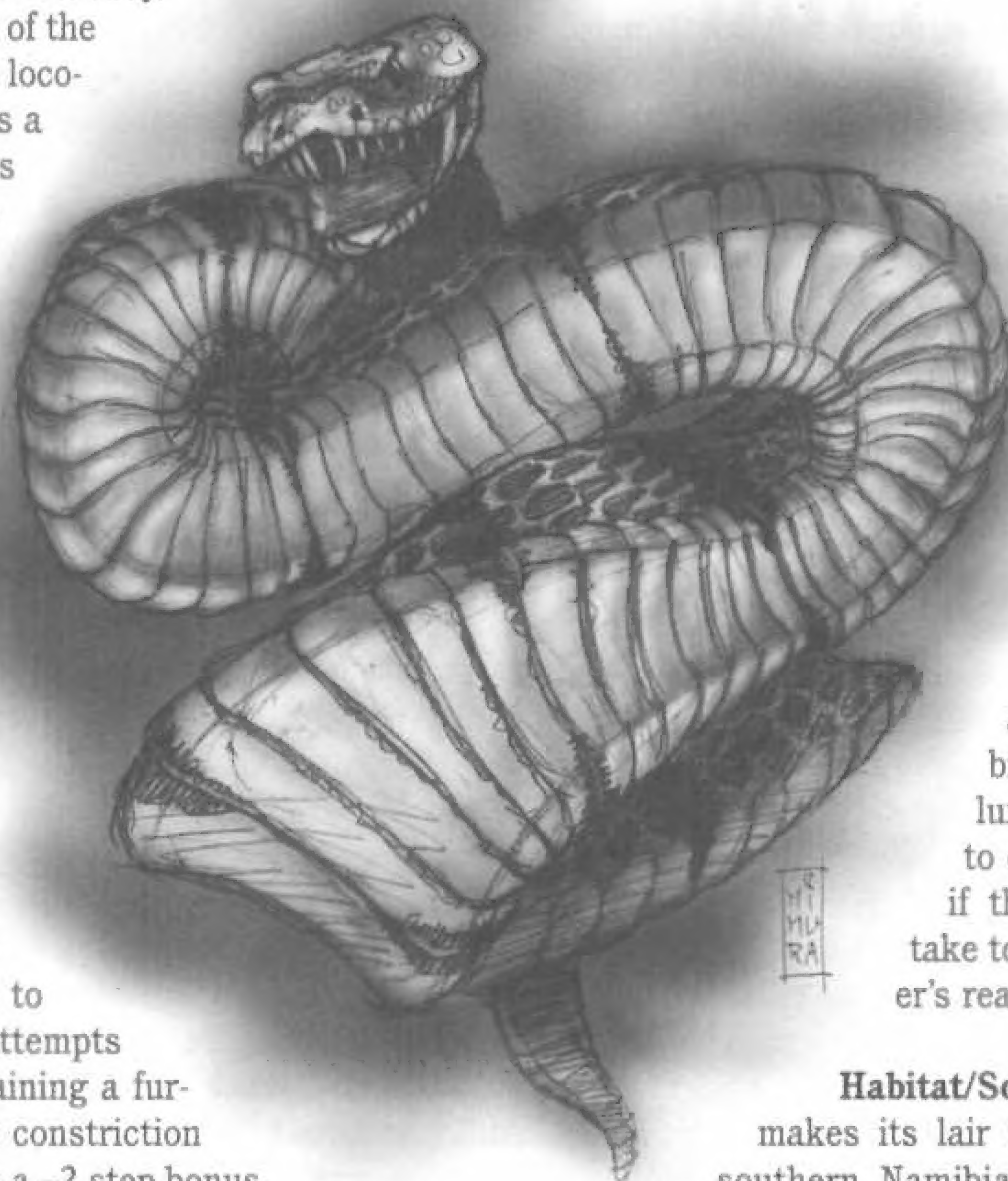
**Encounter:** The serpent "flies" by expanding its rib cage, much the way a cobra expands its hood, and gliding on wind currents. Able to make prodigious leaps by suddenly uncoiling its body, the flying snake can launch itself into the air and glide for 100 meters or more horizontally. After the snake lands, it climbs back up into a tree or a high rock, and depending on the wind, can often manage to ride the air back to its original vantage point. Otherwise, it simply crawls.





Despite the fact that it glides through the air, the flying snake creates a great deal of noise as it twists and turns its body, trying to take best advantage of the wind currents. This awkward locomotion grants other creatures a -1 step bonus to Awareness checks to notice the snake's approach.

The flying snake tries to land atop its prey, and if successful the force of its plummet acts as an overpowering attack. The target is allowed a Strength feat check. If the result of this check does not exceed the result of the snake's plummet attack, the target is knocked to the ground and suffers the penalties for being prone (+2 step penalty to defender's attacks; -2 step bonus to attackers). The snake then attempts to constrict the held prey, gaining a further -2 step bonus to inflict constriction damage. (The prey also gains a -2 step bonus on return attacks, though.) Attempts to break free require an



opposed Strength feat check with a +2 step penalty.

When its prey is dead (or at least has stopped moving), the flying snake begins the laborious process of swallowing it. Once the victim has disappeared down its gullet, the snake makes for a quiet place somewhere on the ground to digest the meal for a while before climbing back to its lair.

Should a flying snake be attacked, it defends itself with its bite until the opponent allows it the luxury of retreat. A common tactic is to coil and leap at its assailant; even if the attack misses, the snake can take to the air and glide out of its attacker's reach.

**Habitat/Society:** The African flying snake makes its lair in the grassy hills and ridges of southern Namibia, though similar creatures have been reported in Tanzania, Kenya, and even South Carolina in the United States. During the night, it sleeps in cracks and crevices among the rocks, usually emerging shortly after dawn, when it begins its day of watching for suitable prey.

The creature's size is a mystery; there is some question as to whether it is even related to *Chrysopelea paradisi*. Those who have never actually seen the African flying snake or the smaller Indian variety suspect that it may be a form of pterosaur, but genetic or magical manipulation is a far more likely possibility. The kinori being active in both India and Africa, the magical theory seems plausible—though no kinori have ever been sighted in conjunction with the flying snake appearances.

**Adventure Hook:** The heroes are investigating sauropod sightings in southern Africa when they hear stories of a giant flying snake terrorizing shepherds in the area. Upon investigating, they find signs of a giant ophidian, but they do not see the serpent itself. After a day's search, though, the heroes are startled to discover a small party of kinori scouring the rocks of the nearby hills, apparently also seeking the flying snake. The kinori retreat rather than confront the heroes on open ground but do not leave the area entirely. They wait and watch.

Do the heroes shift their focus to dispatching the kinori? What happens if the kinori get their claws on the flying snake? And are there more kinori in the area, rushing to the aid of their nestmates?

## Flying Snake Game Data

STR 14 (d8+10) INT 2 (Animal 5 or d4+3)  
DEX 10 (d4+8) WIL 10 (d4+8)  
CON 12 (d8+8) PER 1 (Animal 4 or d4+2)  
Durability: 12/12/6/6 Action check: 11+/10/5/2  
Move: run 16, walk 4, glide 24 #Actions: 2  
Reaction score: Marginal/1

### Attacks

|           |        |                   |      |
|-----------|--------|-------------------|------|
| Plummet   | 14/7/3 | d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s   | LI/O |
| Bite      | 14/7/3 | d4s/d4+2s/d4w     | LI/O |
| Constrict | 16/8/4 | d6+2s/d4+2w/d6+1w | LI/O |

### Defenses

+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
Armor (Ordinary): d4-1 (LI), d4-2 (HI), d4-2 (En)

### Skills

Athletics [14]-climb [16], jump [18]; Unarmed [14]; Acrobatics [10]-fall [14], flight [14]; Stealth [10]; Stamina [12]-endurance [14]; Awareness [10]-intuition [12], perception [12]; Resolve [10]-physical [14].



# North America

The xenofoms of North America are every bit as numerous as those of other continents. Despite three centuries of land development and urban sprawl, North America is still very much the "New World," and not all of its hidden wonders have been revealed. It is well known as home to such creatures as Bigfoot, Ogopogo, and the Jersey Devil. But between the Arctic Circle and the Gulf of Mexico are quite a few other creatures rarely glimpsed by humans.

## Frogman

### INCIDENT: MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT

--Middletown, Ohio

Investigating officer accompanied divers to lake where vehicle apparently left road, according to statement of driver. Skid patterns indicate vehicle went into lake sideways, suggesting it should be near shore. Divers found no sign first day. Divers searched deeper area of lake second day. Divers returned to previous area on third day, discovered possible beaver lodge approx. 200m from accident site. Hints of metal in mud and branches.

Divers suggest vehicle may have been partially afloat after driver left and may have drifted away from impact site. Divers reluctant to disturb beaver dam until Fish & Game Commissioner authorizes.

Investigation postponed pending OK from Fish & Game.

The frogmen are an amphibious race with have some startling similarities to the reptilian kinori. Though obviously not of the same species, the two may share a common ancestor, which could indicate that the frogmen are very distantly related to humans.

**Description:** A frogman stands about 115 centimeters tall and weighs approximately 60 kilograms. It is covered with leathery, hairless, gray-green skin, and its chest is oddly shaped (occasionally described as "lopsided"). The creature's head is

covered in wrinkled ridges, with a wide, lipless mouth and bulging eyes. These features, combined with the novelty of SCUBA at the time these creatures were discovered, made its name inevitable.

**Encounter:** Although frogmen try to avoid humans, their limited observations of human behavior make encounters more likely than they would prefer. Most run-ins with frogmen happen because the creatures did not understand basic concepts: An empty stretch of road in the middle of the night can suddenly see traffic; farm equipment that has been sitting in the same place every night for months isn't necessarily abandoned.

Frogmen who do encounter humans continue about their business, keeping a watchful eye on the strangers, until they can reach water and disappear into its depths. Through past encounters they have learned that running only makes them tired and more easily intercepted. Furthermore, they've observed that humans seem interested but apprehensive, and take this to mean that humans are more afraid of them than vice versa.

If a frogman is fired upon, it generally ignores the attack; it doesn't know what firearms are. If it is actually struck, it panics and runs for the nearest body of water. Even then, the creature may not connect the searing pain with the oddly shaped stick in the hands of the human. (Indeed, some frogmen nests contain rusted old firearms, still loaded with now-useless bullets.)

## Frogman Game Data

STR 8 (d8+4) INT 9 (d8+4)  
DEX 10 (d6+7) WIL 11 (2d4+6)  
CON 9 (d4+7) PER 7 (d6+4)

Durability: 9/9/5/5 Action check: 12+/11/5/2

Move: sprint 18, run 12, walk 4, swim 4 #Actions: 2

Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 0

### Attacks

Unarmed 10/5/2 d4s/d4+1s/d4w LI/O

### Defenses

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

Armor (Ordinary): d4 (LI), d4-1 (HI), d4 (En)

### Skills

Athletics [8]-jump [10]; Unarmed Combat [8]; Stealth [10]-hide [12]; Movement [9]-swim [12]; Knowledge [9]; Awareness [11]-perception [12].





On the other hand, attacking a frogman in melee combat radically arouses its ire. It lashes out, trying to rake its short but sharp claws across its opponent's face. The goal is not to kill its opponent but to escape, so it flees as soon as it is no longer threatened. When the creatures are encountered in numbers, the tactic remains the same; often the frogman who is slow to break off combat finds itself alone against the enemy.

**Habitat/Society:** The frogmen live, reproduce, and die much as other creatures do. They primarily eat fish and small mammals.

Frogmen dwell primarily in rivers, lakes, and swamps. They prefer fresh water to salt, constructing elaborate multichambered nests of mud, sticks, and anything else they can lay their hands on. These nests include both wet and dry chambers; the frogmen live and sleep in the former, and store goods and examine stolen technology in the latter.

Frogmen breathe water more easily than they do air. When out of the water in full daylight, a frogman must check for fatigue damage every 10 minutes, as though it were performing heavy labor. If it attempts to recover lost fatigue out of water, it suffers a +1 step penalty to its *Resolve-physical* check. Note that only exceptional frogmen possess this skill—in most cases this is an untrained check against half the Will score, with a further +1 step penalty.

Frogmen occasionally raid onto dry land for food or material to improve their primitive underwater dwellings. They do so at night, both because they prefer to avoid contact with humans and because the heat of the day quickly dries out their

skin. During violent rainstorms they may venture forth in daylight hours, but never very far from their rivers and lakes. In the summer months they stay almost continuously submerged, and in the winter, they hibernate in their sub-aquatic nests.

Frogmen are aware of the existence of humans and kinori but avoid both. Being fairly primitive lifeforms, they are at the mercy of concerted depredations by more advanced species. Humans, for the most part, are blissfully unaware that they share their waterways with carnivorous humanoid amphibians. On the other hand, the kinori are well aware of the frogmen but do not consider them any kind of threat, thinking of them, if at all, only as an alternative food source. The frogmen are understandably concerned about this and occasionally stage small raids on kinori outposts. Of course, they completely fail to connect these to subsequent kinori raids on frogmen nests, which they see as justification of their fear.

Equally deadly to the frogmen is their occasional capture of kinori technology, which they carefully bear back to their nests to study. Sadly, their lack of any technological expertise means that the frogmen frequently injure or kill themselves trying to unravel the mysteries of buttons, levers, and dials. Though they are gaining knowledge, the learning curve is steep, and more frogmen are likely to die before they work out how to operate the strange devices they recover.

But when that day comes, both kinori and humans may be in trouble, because each female frogman lays hundreds of eggs during the mating season. There are considerably more frogmen hidden away in the waters of North America than any have guessed.

**Adventure Hook:** A drunk driver whose car slid off the road shows up at a local hospital in a state of hysteria, screaming about “monsters in the lake.” After a few days of rest and sedatives, he is coherent enough to explain that when he went into the water, he was attacked by “frog people” who tried to drag him out of his car. After a violent struggle in the rapidly flooding vehicle, he fought his way free and made it to shore. His last memory of the attack is of the frog people croaking menacingly at him as the car finally went under. Police divers have yet to locate the vehicle and are discounting the man's story as drunken fantasy.

The heroes are asked to interview the man, who shows them scars on his chest and back that resemble claw marks. He also claims that the creatures have been coming around his house since that night, trying to get inside and at him. If the heroes show any indication of believing his story, he begs them to protect him. But as it turns out, his nocturnal visitors are actually kinori, come to investigate the situation for themselves.

Will the heroes help the drunk driver? Why were the frogmen so interested in his car? And can the heroes learn the connection between the frogmen and the kinori—or do they assume the “frog people” were actually kinori, seen through an alcohol-soaked panic?



# Nataska

'We interviewed Russell Norberg, an inmate at the Madison Street juvenile detention facility. Mr. Norberg indicated that he believed the seven missing inmates had not been transferred or released but had been sold by the warden to evil spirits disguised as workmen.'

'Any supernatural explanation can obviously be discounted. Representatives suspect a possible white slavery operation, but could find no evidence that the warden had deposited unusually large sums of money in any bank accounts.'

The Nataska is also known as the black ogre kachina, one of a multitude of Hopi spirits devoted to overseeing aspects of everyday life.

**Description:** A Nataska is a massive humanoid that stands 3 meters tall and has an apelike head. Its flesh is covered with a layer of thin black hair, thicker on its arms, legs, back, shoulders, and head. The Nataska's mouth is large enough to envelop a small child whole.

When the beast bothers to dress, it wears traditional Hopi Indian garb. It always carries a large, jagged bone saw that it drags along the ground or against buildings, producing a horrible screech reminiscent of fingernails on chalkboards.

**Encounter:** Nataska always work in pairs, a habit left over from their days as assistants for more powerful kachinas. Their original function was to support the Soyok' Wuhti, the "ogre woman" who provided discipline for Hopi children. Now the "black ogres" simply abduct youngsters.

Heroes encounter Nataska only when they are hunting or when they just taken a child. The beasts unhesitatingly fight to take or keep their prize, relenting only if they each suffer more than half their wound points in damage. If one is killed, though, the other remains and fights to the death, seeking revenge.

If at any point the heroes offer to bargain with the spirits, the Nataska cease fighting and begin negotiating (though they gladly resume combat if discussions break down). One of the kachinas does the dealing, while the other keeps the child firmly in its grasp. For negotiations to begin at all, at least one of the heroes must be able to speak Hopi or one of the other Uto-Aztecan languages, such as Comanche, Nahuatl (Aztec), or Shoshone.

Arriving at an agreement requires a successful opposed Interaction-bargain check, with a +2 step penalty if the heroes offer anything but a suitable meal. Since only the flesh

of a human will satisfy the Nataska, though, negotiations begin at an awkward point. Clever heroes can try to disguise something else as a living human using Deception-bluff, with modifiers depending on the composition of the proposed meal. A stump or stone dressed as a human would incur a +3 step penalty; a platter of beef adorned with bits of hair and clothing, +2; a human corpse, only +1. If the heroes succeed in this deceit, their Interaction-bargain check is at no penalty. However, it incurs a further +2 step penalty if the attempted deceit fails.

Even if the heroes fool the Nataska so that they accept the meal, the spirits become angry. They do not seek revenge—a bargain is a bargain. However, the heroes automatically incur a further +2 step penalty to any future attempts to bargain with these monsters.

**Habitat/Society:** The Nataska are just one kind among hundreds of Hopi kachinas. Though once simply assistants, as the tide of dark matter has grown stronger, the Nataska have grown more powerful and more independent.

Traditionally the Nataska tried to purchase children from their parents with a handful of money. The most poorly behaved children fetched the lowest prices, since their parents were more eager to be rid of them. Thus the Nataska made good bogeymen to frighten Hopi children into obedience. Originally, they would haggle first and abduct later. Now they

## Nataska Game Data

|                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| STR 14 (d6+11)                  | INT 10 (d6+7)            |
| DEX 11 (d4+9)                   | WIL 12 (d4+10)           |
| CON 14 (d6+11)                  | PER 10 (d6+7)            |
| Durability: 14/14/7/7           | Action check: 14+/13/6/3 |
| Move: sprint 24, run 16, walk 6 | #Actions: 3              |
| Reaction score: Ordinary/2      | Last resorts: 1          |

### Attacks

|         |        |                   |      |
|---------|--------|-------------------|------|
| Unarmed | 18/9/4 | d4+3s/d4+4s/d4+5s | LI/O |
| Bite    | 14/7/3 | d6s/d4+1w/d4+3w   | LI/O |
| Saw     | 17/8/4 | d4w/d4+2w/2d4+1w  | LI/O |

### Defenses

+3 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
Armor (Ordinary): d4-1 (LI), d4-1 (HI), d4 (En)

### Skills

Athletics [14]; Melee [14]-blade [17]; Unarmed [14]-brawl [18]; Stamina [14]-endurance [18]; Survival [14]; Investigate [12]; Lore [12]-occult [14]; Resolve [12]-mental [14], physical [15]; Interaction [10]-bargain [12], intimidate [14].



A large, dark, and detailed illustration of two monstrous creatures, the Nataska, emerging from a dense, dark forest. The creatures have multiple long, sharp horns or spikes on their heads and are holding large, curved blades or saws. The background is a misty, dark landscape.
   
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descend on an unattended child and ask if anyone within the sound of their voices wishes to bargain for its life. When no one responds—because, of course, no one heard their offer—the Nataska carry off the child.

Luckily for those encountering them, the spirits maintain the tradition of negotiating for their meals. If a mortal can strike a bargain with the Nataska within a few hours of the abduction, they return the stolen child. But since the Nataska are not given to generous delays before enjoying their meals, rarely do such rescues succeed.

**Adventure Hook:** Representatives of Amnesty International approach the heroes after several juvenile inmates vanish from their cells at the Madison Street Jail in Phoenix, Arizona. They believe that the prisoners were sold into slavery somewhere but can find no proof. On interrogation, some inmates claim

that evil spirits under the warden's control carried off the missing prisoners.

Through investigation of the facility's records and interviews with the inmates, the heroes discover that the warden—an Indian from the Hopi reservation in northeast Arizona—periodically locks down the facility and sends most of the staff home. He then tours the jail in the company of two dark, hulking creatures, who drag massive saws behind them on the concrete floors. (The inmates are regularly assigned to paint over these marks, so they know when another youth has vanished.)

Can the heroes discover the warden's grim pact with the Nataska before they take another life? Or is the warden actually using his knowledge of kachinas to fight the monsters? And what happens if the Nataska are prevented from claiming such easy meals?





## Wendigo

'How long after you ran out of food did you start hearing the noises? The howling noises?'

'It was three days. The day after Todd disappeared.'

'So you didn't have anything to eat for three days. And when you saw Cpl. Todd again, you shot him.'

'He wasn't Todd anymore! He was that thing, that thing the Indian told us about.'

'The cannibal monster. Right. So you shot Cpl. Todd because he was a cannibal?'

'Yes. The wendigo. Like the Indian said.'

'So you didn't have anything to eat for three days, and

you shot Cpl. Todd, but you didn't bring back his body? You know, Lieutenant, I believe there was a cannibal up there, and I'm looking at him right now!'

In the forests of Canada, legends of the wendigo go back hundreds of years—long before Algernon Blackwood popularized the story in "The Wendigo." Some tales describe it as a giant in white robes, others as a sort of white werewolf. In truth, the name wendigo is given to a human possessed by a spirit of the north woods—one that hungers for human flesh.

**Description:** When the wendigo spirit possesses a human being, he or she takes on a feral crouch, moving about on all fours. The wendigo's body sprouts dirty, scraggly white hair, and the teeth grow like a cat's. The hands and feet develop soft pads and short, curved, feline claws. Finally, the ears extend and come to a point, completing the transformation.

**Encounter:** Like many predatory animals, the wendigo prefers to separate its prey from the "herd," so the target can be dispatched





## Wendigo Game Data

STR 14 (d6+11) INT 3 (Animal 8 or d8+4)  
 DEX 15 (2d4+10) WIL 10 (d6+7)  
 CON 14 (d6+11) PER 4 (Animal 9 or d8+5)  
 Durability: 14/14/7/7 Action check: 14+/13/6/3  
 Move: sprint 44, run 30, walk 12 #Actions: 3  
 Reaction score: Ordinary/2

### Attacks

|            |        |                   |      |
|------------|--------|-------------------|------|
| Claws (x2) | 15/7/3 | d4+1s/d4+1w/d6+1w | LI/O |
| Bite       | 16/8/4 | d4w/d6+1w/d4m     | LI/O |

### Defenses

+3 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 Armor (Ordinary): d4+1 (LI), d4 (HI), d4+2 (En)

### Skills

Athletics [14]—*climb* [16], *jump* [16]; Unarmed [14]; Acrobatics [15]—*dodge* [18]; Stealth [15]—*shadow* [18], *sneak* [18]; Stamina [14]—*endurance* [18]; Survival [14]; Awareness [10]—*intuition* [14]; Investigate [10]—*track* [14]; Resolve [10]—*physical* [14].

without interference. Unlike an animal, though, the wendigo prefers terror tactics to the quick kill, seeking to frighten its prey into running.

When a wendigo discovers humans, it begins stalking them by thoroughly searching through their camp (or neighborhood, in civilized areas). It uses this time to determine what level of resistance they are likely to offer and to steal any weapons they were careless enough to leave lying about. Otherwise, the only indication that the wendigo has been there are the occasional footprints it leaves—which to human eyes appear disturbing enough.

On subsequent nights, the wendigo visits the area of the camp but does not approach closely. Instead, it periodically utters a high, wailing howl, loud enough to awaken those nearby (–3 step bonus to Awareness checks). The sound is so eerie that anyone who hears it must immediately attempt a Resolve—*mental resolve* check at a +2 step penalty. A Failure result means a nervous, sleepless night, conferring an additional +1 step penalty to further *mental resolve* checks, while a Critical Failure results in panicked, headlong flight.

If someone flees, the wendigo gives chase. If not, it waits until the humans try to return to sleep. Then it howls again. The wendigo keeps up this process night after night until either someone breaks and runs or the humans are too exhausted to offer resistance to an attack. Those who opt to

sleep during the day and travel at night suffer a +1 step penalty to Stamina—*endurance* checks, in addition to other penalties for terrain type. (See “Strategic Movement” in Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action in the *Gamemaster Guide*.)

When the wendigo catches up to its prey, it begins with an overpowering attack followed by a takedown. Once the victim is prone, the wendigo uses either a bum’s rush to separate the victim from its companions, or a maul if the prey is already alone. If possible it tries to attack its prey from the rear (–2 step bonus) or the flank (–1 step bonus). If the wendigo has successfully killed one human and others still remain, it usually leaves a portion of its kill for the survivors to discover—right outside wherever they are sleeping. Finding this grisly omen confers an additional +1 step penalty to the Resolve—*mental resolve* check when next the wendigo howls.

**Habitat/Society:** The spirit of the wendigo chooses as its victims those who seek to conquer the north woods—not as punishment, but because it admires their desire to rule nature. To it, possessing such a human acknowledges it as the “pack alpha” and gives it the power to dominate the forest more directly.

A human who has become the wendigo has no choice but to feed its ravenous hunger, and its favorite food is human. The wendigo initially preys on humans who enter its forest, though as those become less frequent, it begins raiding in civilized areas as well.

In time a wendigo will perish, having depleted its food supply (less likely now that populations are so much larger) or been hunted down and destroyed. It leaves behind the naked corpse of the human it was, while the spirit moves on to seek a new host—perhaps even someone who had a part in the death of the previous host. But unless that person has the same quality of dominance, the spirit is just as happy to build an appetite, waiting for a more suitable candidate to appear.

**Adventure Hook:** The heroes are on a reconnaissance mission near Hudson’s Bay when they come across a frozen corpse half-buried in snow. The only identification they can find is a faded tattoo of the U.S. Army Airborne Division (an eagle’s head on a black shield, with the word “Airborne” above it). The man has been shot in the head and apparently dragged to this spot from somewhere else—very recently.

That night, the heroes hear the cries of the wendigo. They are still 100 kilometers from their designated pickup, and are faced with a hard choice. Do they confront the creature that is stalking them or push on and hope they can endure the wendigo’s tactics long enough to reach safety?



# Central and South America

Settled for a few thousand years before Europeans came along, Central and South America have a rich history of mysterious creatures. Discovering the source of Inca and Aztec mythology alone could take several centuries. Add to this more recent discoveries such as El Chupacabras, and this area has become a cryptozoologist's playground.

## El Chupacabras

**COBRAKING:** ever hear of el chupacabras??

**HOFF MAN:** The goatsucker, sure.

**REDDYKILO:** GOAT SUCKER

**COBRAKING:** i know a guy who has one

**REDDYKILO:** BULL

**COBRAKING:** no lie, he's a rancher down in  
texas, keeps it locked in his barn and feeds  
it sheep

**REDDYKILO:** YEAH PULL THE OTHER ONE PAL

**HOFF MAN:** You got a name for this guy with  
the goatsucker in his barn?

**Description:** El Chupacabras (Spanish for "goatsucker") is described as a hairy, bipedal creature about 120 centimeters tall. Its body is small, almost childlike, with thin arms but muscular legs. A series of short, sharp spikes run from the top of its large, round head, down to the base of its spine. El Chupacabras's mouth has no lips but sports a set of sharp, canine fangs. The arms end in hawklike talons and sport a kind of webbing; although these resemble wings, they do not appear to be used for flight but only for slowing descents.

By far the most startling features of El Chupacabras are its large red eyes, which witnesses have compared to those of Greys. Though a full study has yet to take place, the logical conclusion is that they provide limited night vision. (This improves the effective light level by 1 step; see Table G7: Detection Modifiers in Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action in the *Gamemaster Guide*.)

**Encounter:** El Chupacabras avoids humans whenever possible, so encounters with it must be the result of either a carefully laid trap or the most extreme of coincidences. Even then, unless prevented, the goatsucker retreats as quickly as possible.

The creature attacks only to feed upon the blood of domesticated animals (usually livestock, though it has been known to exsanguinate the occasional pet). It first telepathically lulls

its victim into a stupor, then advances openly—though still cautiously. This drives away any other animals, leaving it free to drain its victim. After it has inflicted wound damage with an initial bite or (less commonly) a claw attack, El Chupacabras drinks the victim's blood for an additional d4s damage each round.

If the goatsucker is disturbed while feeding, it reacts with immediate flight, even leaping over hillsides or cliff edges. Its webbed arms grant a -1 step bonus to Acrobatics-*fall* checks. Should it become trapped, it fights back, first with telepathic suggestions to flee, then by more physical means. In this situation El Chupacabras is most dangerous to humans: If it manages to incapacitate its erstwhile attacker and there is no one else around to interfere, it is likely to feed off its assailant rather than returning to the original prey.

**Habitat/Society:** The physical characteristics of El Chupacabras suggest a kinori or Grey connection—perhaps both,

## El Chupacabras Game Data

|                                 |         |                          |                     |
|---------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| STR 7                           | (d6+4)  | INT 5                    | (Animal 9 or d6+6)  |
| DEX 13                          | (d6+10) | WIL 9                    | (d6+5)              |
| CON 11                          | (d6+8)  | PER 9                    | (Animal 11 or d4+9) |
| Durability: 11/11/6/6           |         | Action check: 15+/14/7/3 |                     |
| Move: sprint 30, run 20, walk 8 |         | #Actions: 2              |                     |
| Reaction score: Ordinary/2      |         |                          |                     |
| Psionic energy points: 9        |         |                          |                     |

### Attacks

|              |       |                 |          |
|--------------|-------|-----------------|----------|
| Claws (×2)   | 8/4/2 | d4s/d4w/d4+2w   | LI/O     |
| Bite         | 7/3/1 | d4+1s/d4w/d4+1w | LI/O     |
| Drink blood* | —     | special         | see text |

\* El Chupacabras may drink the blood of an unconscious or unresisting victim for d4s damage per round of draining.

### Defenses

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
+3 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
Armor (Ordinary): d4 (LI), d4-1 (HI), d4 (En)

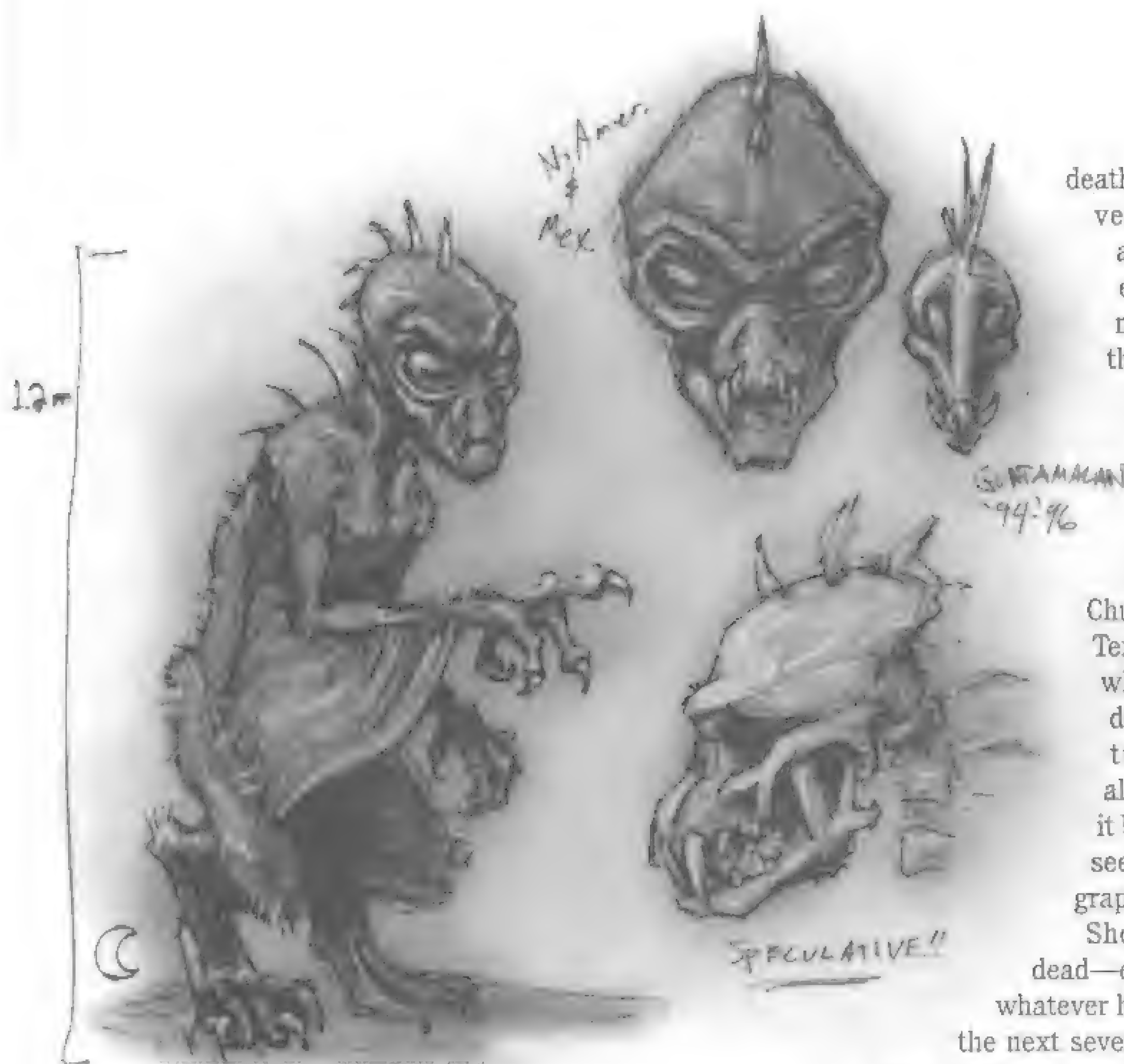
### Skills

Athletics [7]-*climb* [9], *jump* [12]; Unarmed [7]; Acrobatics [13]-*dodge* [20], *fall* [14]; Stealth [13]-*hide* [18], *sneak* [16]; Movement [11]; Stamina [11]; Awareness [9]-*perception* [12].

### Psionic Skills

Biokinesis [11]-*control metabolism* [13], *rejuvenate* [12]; Telepathy [9]-*suggest* [10].





given the Grey propensity for gene splicing. But there is no evidence to tie it to either species. On the other hand, recently gathered blood samples from Mexico support the theory that different Strangers might be inadvertently responsible for the goatsucker: the ekimmu.

The Hoffmann Institute theorizes that at some point in the past (perhaps as far back as the 14th century, judging from old Indian myths) an ordinary animal, possibly a coyote, somehow became infected with the ekimmu parasite. The parasite tried its best to physically change the animal so that it would function more like a human, the ekimmu's preferred host organism. But with the limitations imposed by the animal's genetic material, certain unpredictable mutations occurred—mutations that drastically altered the ekimmu's physical form, as well as its consciousness. What remained was a monstrous, bestial predator that could derive sustenance only from blood.

El Chupacabras has been sighted throughout Central America and southern North America, implying that the original mutation has procreated over the years. It may have learned to spread its essence to animals that either travel across national borders or are transported by unsuspecting owners as they immigrate to new lands.

Since the goatsucker is careful not to feed off those whose

death would draw attention to itself, it is very possibly more widespread than anyone suspects. Further, if some ekimmu were able to infect one nonhuman species, it stands to reason that they could likewise infect others—which explains why eyewitness descriptions of El Chupacabras are often contradictory.

**Adventure Hook:** The heroes are ordered to attempt the capture of a live Chupacabras and dispatched to southern Texas. There they meet a local rancher who claims to have caught one after accidentally hitting it with his car. The creature was stunned, he says, which allowed him to bring it to his farm and nurse it back to health. He refuses to let the heroes see it, though, instead offering blurry photographs and dead livestock as proof of his tale.

Shortly afterwards, the rancher is found dead—exsanguinated—and the heroes learn that whatever he had locked in his barn has escaped. Over the next several nights, pets and livestock also turn up dead. At first these deaths are helpful clues in tracking El Chupacabras—if that's what it was. But soon the heroes realize that the reports are too widely scattered to be the work of a single beast. Have more goatsuckers joined the first? Or has this one learned to reproduce?

## Mapinguari

The Amazon Indians believe the Mapinguari is the transformed body of a shaman, cursed by the gods for uncovering the secret of immortality. Zoologists and naturalists, though, suspect it is actually a giant ground sloth—an animal supposedly extinct for 8,500 years. Despite numerous expeditions into the South American jungles, paleontologists have been unable to prove their theory. The Indians, on the other hand, are unwilling to disbelieve theirs.

**Description:** Natives of the Amazon jungle describe the Mapinguari as a giant bear standing 2 meters tall that walks upright, covered in dark red or black fur, with a humanlike face. Its clawed feet turn backward, its stench is unbearable—even incapacitating—and its roar terrifies even the bravest hunters. Justifiably so: The beast has been known to shrug off even shotgun blasts (possibly due to bony plates in its skeleton).

**Encounter:** Heroes exploring in the Amazon rainforest preserves might encounter the Mapinguari while it is foraging.



The first sign of its presence is its lengthy, unnerving roar, which lasts for up to a minute and is audible for a kilometer. Living beings within 200 meters must attempt *Resolve—mental resolve* checks to resist the urge to flee.

Should the heroes manage to approach within 20 meters of the Mapinguari, though, they may wish they had fled. A large scent gland located in the beast's abdomen (occasionally described as a "second mouth") secretes a pungent odor that attracts insects and repels predators. Anyone exposed to this



stench must make a successful *Resolve—physical resolve* check at a +1 step penalty to withstand it. (The step penalty increases to +2 if the creature has been killed.) On a Critical Failure, the character suffers  $d6+2s$  damage, against which armor is ineffective; Failure,  $d6s$ ; Ordinary,  $d4s$ . The check must be repeated once every  $d6$  minutes.

Both of these defenses are designed to discourage attackers, but if someone comes closer than 15 meters, the Mapinguari strikes with an overpower attempt, followed by a takedown maneuver. If both of these succeed, the beast

an informant close to the Presley camp tells us that Elvis will take the alien's offer and record a new album.

## MONSTER SLOTH MAULS BIOLOGISTS!

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil -- The mysterious beast known to Amazon tribes as "Mapinguari," suspected by paleontologists of being a giant ground sloth thought extinct for several millennia, has turned killer, putting one American biologist in the hospital and leaving two more dead.

"It was only a matter of time," said veteran rainforest guide Manuel Aznar. "These scientists have been tempting fate to get a better look at the Mapinguari."

"Now it has become the last thing they ever saw."

## MAN SPENDS FOUR YEARS

receives a -2 step bonus to further attacks against the same target; however, if one of those subsequent attacks fails, the victim is no longer prone. If the Mapinguari's attacks fail, or if it loses more than half its wound points, it flees unless cornered—in which case, it will fight to the death.

**Habitat/Society:** The Mapinguari, if scientists are correct, is a nocturnal herbivore that feeds on the abundant jungle flora and migrates seasonally in search of water. It is also very elusive, for

despite its thunderous bellow and massive size, none have yet been captured or even photographed. Recordings of its roar exist, however, and Indian hunters claim to have killed one, although they were unable to bring it back for study due to its debilitating odor—which is even worse after death.

**Adventure Hook:** After the Mapinguari allegedly attacks a group of scientists, the heroes' organization assigns them to join an expedition to the Amazon rainforest, where government-sponsored bounty hunters are gathering in force to track and destroy the beast.

Indian legends, however, say that killing the Mapinguari incurs the wrath of the gods, who will curse the offenders with





## Mapinguari Game Data

STR 19 (d4+17) INT 3 (Animal 8 or d6+5)  
 DEX 9 (d4+7) WIL 14 (d6+11)  
 CON 18 (d4+16) PER 4 (Animal 10 or d4+8)  
 Durability: 18/18/9/9 Action check: 13+/12/6/3  
 Move: sprint 28, run 18, walk 6 #Actions: 4  
 Reaction score: Ordinary/2

### Attacks

Claws 19/9/4 d6+2s/d4+2w/d6+2w LI/O  
 Stench — special see text

### Defenses

+5 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 Armor (Good): d6 (LI), d6 (HI), d6-1 (En)

### Skills

Athletics [19]; Unarmed [19]; Stealth [9]; Stamina [18]—  
*endurance* [20]; Awareness [14]—*intuition* [15]; Investigate  
 [14]—*search* [15]; Resolve [14]—*physical* [18].

shapes even more horrible. The heroes have to convince the skeptical hunters to postpone the expedition long enough to investigate the natives' claims.

But while the heroes research, the overzealous hunters jump the gun. Using gas masks and night-vision gear, they manage to surprise and wound the Mapinguari, which then goes on a rampage—with a native village in its path.

The heroes now have to work even faster to find the truth of the ancient legend before either the village is wiped out, and if the story is true, the hunters become even more rapacious monsters.

## Thunderbird

Native American lore tells of the thunderbird, a gigantic beast whose wings beat like thunder and whose eyes flash lightning. Though these tales are hundreds of years old, modern cryptozoology documents sightings—and attacks—by what appear to be giant vultures, which may be the basis of the thunderbird legend.

**Description:** The Thunderbird is a gigantic avian, perhaps related to the extinct condorlike species *Teratornis merriami*. It stands 1.25 meters tall with a wingspan of 5 meters, and is always black, gray, or brown in coloration, with a bald head and a white ruff around its neck. It has a long, narrow hooked beak, and sharp talons on its feet.

**Encounter:** Thunderbirds rarely attack full-grown humans but have been known to swoop down on children. They seem particularly interested in young kinori, which may give some interesting insights into legends of the thunderbird battling supernatural enemies of humanity.

When a thunderbird attacks it makes a single pass, attempting an overpower maneuver to grip the prey in its talons. If this is successful, the thunderbird flies away with the victim. Assuming there is no significant resistance, the bird ascends to about 10 meters and flies to an isolated spot to devour its prey. Food that puts up a fight—or that someone tries to rescue—is more

trouble than it's worth. A thunderbird that suffers damage equal to more than half its stun points or any wound or mortal damage immediately drops its prey and heads for higher altitude.

If the thunderbird takes its prey to some isolated locale, it begins tearing into its meal with its sharp beak. This is the same tactic it uses if forced to fight, though against targets its own size or larger, it does so only until it is able to fly away.

## GIANT BIRD ATTACKS BUSINESSMAN

SILVER CITY, NM (AP) - A Las Cruces land developer has been attacked three times in the past two weeks by what authorities describe as a giant condor and local Navajo Indians are calling the mythical "Thunderbird." "The thing that attacked me and my family is no myth," said Owen Crushank, 41, in a telephone interview. "It was as big as a single-engine airplane, and it tried to carry off my son." Crushank's son, Jeremy, 4, was unhurt, though Crushank and his wife Linda suffered minor cuts driving the large bird away. "We don't understand why it keeps attacking us," Crushank said.

Local Navajos, however, say that Crushank's plan to build a casino near the Black Mountain Range has angered the spirit of the Thunderbird. "Mister Crushank would be wise to locate his casino elsewhere," said one Navajo spokesman, who asked not to be identified.

Please see **ATTACK** on A13

**Habitat/Society:** Thunderbirds occupy the mountains of the western United States, as well as the Smokies and the Ozarks. They are also found in northern Mexico and throughout South America. They build nests in cliff caves, from which they search for carrion and small animals, usually swallowing the latter whole.

Despite Native American legends that teach of its beneficence and wisdom, the thunderbird is often inimical to humans, though not particularly hostile. To it, a small child is not very different from a sheep or a goat, and the giant bird will readily snatch up and carry off an untended youngster. Many accounts of thunderbirds tell of them doing just that.





## Thunderbird Game Data

STR 9 (d4+7) INT 3 (Animal 8 or d6+5)  
 DEX 13 (d6+10) WIL 12 (d8+8)  
 CON 7 (d6+4) PER 2 (Animal 6 or d4+4)  
 Durability: 7/7/4/4 Action check: 14+/13/6/3  
 Move: walk 8, glide 65, fly 80 #Actions: 2  
 Reaction score: Ordinary/2

### Attacks

Talons 13/6/3 d4s/d4+1s/d4+1w LI/O  
 Beak 12/6/3 d4+1s/d4+1w/d4+2w LI/O

### Defenses

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 Armor (Ordinary): d4-1 (LI), none (HI), d4-2 (En)

### Skills

Athletics [9]-climb [12]; Unarmed [9]-brawl [13]; Acrobatics [13]-flight [16]; Stealth [13]; Stamina [7]-endurance [11]; Awareness [12]-perception [18]; Resolve [12]-physical [14].

Thunderbirds are extremely propitious signs for Native American shamans. Their tail feathers are useful in working the Shamanism miracle *dreamwalking*, granting a -2 step bonus if the casting shaman gathers the feathers.

**Adventure Hook:** The heroes are driving through the countryside when they see a gigantic bird fly past, clutching some struggling creature. As they observe this awesome sight, a pickup truck passes them, carrying several people who are firing rapidly at the bird with shotguns and rifles. After a few moments, the bird drops its burden and flies high into the air.

The heroes see that the dropped item is a small boy, who is scratched and bruised but otherwise unhurt. The truck's passengers explain that he is the son of a wealthy landowner, whose family has been under attack by the thunderbird ever since he began a development project. The businessman purchased the land from local Indians, who according to his employees in the truck, changed their minds after the deal was signed and put a curse on him and his family. The thunderbird has been attacking for weeks now, having already carried off the family dog and the housekeeper's child.

The landowner has had enough and is sending his people to force the Indians to remove the curse. Should the heroes interfere, without knowing all the facts? Can they prove that the thunderbird is just a type of giant condor, not some myth come to life? Or is it really a manifestation of the Indians' anger?



# Asia

Lands that give birth to stories of hopping vampires, shape-changing foxes, and multilimbed gods are bound to produce some interesting cryptozoological discoveries. From Russia to Hong Kong, the Asian continent fairly overflows with legends given form, including the yeti and yeren, the kappa, and the demonic oni. Add to that the mundane species recently discovered in Vietnam's Vu Quang Nature Reserve, and the potential number of new creatures to be cataloged jumps dramatically.

## Ikuya

*'Myi porhli tuda, stobiy vzyat medved—Ikuya. No smachala on ubil nashkovo oruzheynoro spetsialista, a potom ubil nashkovo spetsialista so-obsheniya—K tomu vremeni kogda on sledoval za nami, myi ubezhali cherez lyod, I nashli eto myesto.'*

*'I can't make out what this guy's saying, but offhand, I'd guess he's in big trouble—which means we are, too.'*

**Description:** The average grizzly (also known as "brown") bear stands about 1 meter high at the shoulder, or 2 meters when upright on its hind legs, and has front claws about 10 centimeters long. The Ikuya is a monstrous cousin: three times as large, with 30-centimeter claws and 8-centimeter teeth and weighing over 1,200 kilograms. Though a brown bear might have the same yellowish-white fur as the Ikuya, it is impossible to mistake one for the other.

**Encounter:** The Koriak reindeer hunters of Russia's far north and the Inuit people of Alaska and northern Canada say that the Ikuya appears only when the winter is particularly harsh. Zoologists might say this is because the bear's usual game is scarce then, but those who claim to have actually seen it believe that the Ikuya brings the weather. At such times, the beast is ravenously hungry and attacks nearly anything edible.

Despite its overpowering hunger, though, the Ikuya does not attack foolishly. It is an intelligent beast and well aware that human weapons can cause it pain. Consequently, if armed humans are the only available prey, it draws hunters far out into the wilderness in pursuit of it. Often traveling for days, the creature relies on its fantastic endurance while starvation and cold weaken its foes, before it finally turns and faces them.

The Ikuya's combat tactics are simple. It begins with a powerful blow from the paws, meant to overwhelm its target. This initial attack combines the overpower and takedown maneuvers,



## Ikuya Game Data

|                                 |         |                          |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|
| STR 20                          | (d6+17) | INT 6                    | (d4+2)  |
| DEX 10                          | (d4+8)  | WIL 14                   | (d6+11) |
| CON 20                          | (d6+17) | PER 8                    | (d4+6)  |
| Durability: 20/20/10/10         |         | Action check: 14+/13/6/3 |         |
| Move: sprint 40, run 24, walk 8 |         | #Actions: 4              |         |
| Reaction score: Ordinary/2      |         | Last resorts: 0          |         |

### Attacks

|       |         |                    |      |
|-------|---------|--------------------|------|
| Claws | 20/10/5 | d6+2s/d6+2w/2d4+2w | LI/O |
| Bite  | 20/10/5 | d6w/d6+1w/d4m      | LI/O |

### Defenses

+5 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 no resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 -2 step bonus to resist toxins  
 Armor (Good): d4+1 (LI), d4 (HI), d4 (En)

### Skills

Athletics [20]; Unarmed [20]; Movement [20]; Stamina [20]—endurance [22]; Awareness [14]—intuition [15]; Investigate [14]—search [16], track [16]; Resolve [14]—physical [18].



incurring a +2 step penalty to its Unarmed Attack check. If the attack is successful, the victim is thrown to the ground. The great bear then brings its full weight down on the hapless victim, attempting to pin it (as per the maneuver). If the pin succeeds, the bear uses its powerful jaws to finish off its prey, not relenting until one or the other is dead.

**Habitat/Society:** The Ikuya may be the only one of its kind. It is only encountered singly, and long periods of time pass between its appearances, which may be in widely different locales. Of course, the sheer ferocity of the giant bear makes it impossible for most people to move close enough to examine its old scars and survive.

Two Inuit hunters killed such a creature in 1864 and shipped its skin and skull to the Smithsonian Institute, where it was identified decades later as a new species of bear—or perhaps a very old species. This would suggest that there must be more than one. But modern Inuit say that the skull and pelt in Washington, D.C., are not from the great bear at all, but from what the beast wanted the hunters to believe was the true Ikuya. As proof, they point out that the next expedition the two hunters undertook was their last—they were never seen by mortal eyes again.

The Inuit maintain that the Ikuya is a god, and that it brings vicious winters and horrible death to humans who do not show proper respect for the ordinary bears they hunt. This may be true only for the Inuit, however, since whites have been hunting bears in these regions since the 1800s, and few have encountered the Ikuya. On the other hand, the Ikuya may not be able to differentiate between various humans, and so may be wreaking its revenge on nearby inhabitants rather than distant civilized humans—unless of course the latter are foolish enough to come looking for it.

**Adventure Hook:** A remote Alaskan research station belonging to the heroes' organization provides aid to a small group of Russian agents who have trekked across the Bering ice floes. The Russians are able to convey only that they are being chased by something, and the research station calls for someone to pick them up. The organization assigns the heroes to fly in and bring the Russians back to a central office for debriefing.

But when the heroes arrive, they find research station torn apart, apparently by a gargantuan bear. Everyone is dead—and, just their luck, the heroes are prevented from leaving by a storm front that has descended out of nowhere.

As the heroes wait out the storm, the Ikuya attacks, at first trying to rip its way into the station, then simply destroying their transport. When the weather clears, the heroes discover that there was in fact one survivor of the previous attack: a Russian agent who had fled into the storm when the monster struck, only to become lost and end up back where he started.

Eventually the heroes learn that the Russians had been

assigned to capture the great bear but only incurred its wrath. They tried to escape by fleeing across the Bering Strait, but it caught up to them here. The beast continues attacking until it has had its revenge.

Will the heroes leave the Russian to his fate? Will that be even enough to appease the Ikuya? And why did the Russians want to capture such a monster?

## Naga

The Sanskrit word naga means simply “serpent”—a symbol of wisdom in Indian culture. But its true origin is based on the existence of a small number of intelligent serpents that visited

### Naga Game Data

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| STR 10 (d8+6)                                     | INT 12 (d4+10) |
| DEX 14 (d4+12)                                    | WIL 14 (2d4+9) |
| CON 9 (2d4+4)                                     | PER 10 (d8+6)  |
| Durability: 9/9/5/5      Action check: 15+/14/7/3 |                |
| Move: sprint 24, run 16, walk 6      #Actions: 2  |                |
| Reaction score: Ordinary/2      Last resorts: 1   |                |
| Psionic energy points: 14                         |                |
| FX energy points: 12                              |                |

#### Attacks

|           |        |                   |      |
|-----------|--------|-------------------|------|
| Constrict | 12/6/3 | d4+2s/d6+2s/d4+2w | LI/O |
| Strike*   | 14/7/4 | d4+1s/d6+1s/d4w   | LI/O |

\* Poison (see text)

#### Defenses

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 +2 resistance modifier vs. WIL-based attacks  
 Armor (Ordinary): d4–1 (LI), d4–2 (HI), d4–2 (En)

#### Skills

Unarmed [10]; Stealth [14]—*hide* [16], *sneak* [16]; Stamina [9]—*endurance* [10]; Knowledge [12]—*language (Hindi)* [14]; Social Science [12]—*anthropology* [14], *history* [14]; Awareness [14]—*perception* [16]; Lore [14]—*occult* [16], *psychic* [15]; Deception [10]; Interaction [10]—*bargain* [12], *charm* [12], *intimidate* [14], *seduce* [11].

#### Psionic Skills

ESP [12]—*empathy* [14], *precognition* [14]; Telepathy [10]—*contact* [14], *suggest* [12].

#### FX Skills

Faith (Shamanism)—*dreamwalking* [14], *hunter's stare* [16], *venom spirit* [14].





Earth in millennia past, then found themselves trapped when the tide of dark matter ebbed. Now they live as gods in isolated temples all but forgotten by modern civilization.

**Description:** A naga appears very much like any other extremely large snake and shares many of the markings of the cobra. The typical naga measures approximately 8 meters in length and is several dozen centimeters in diameter. Like the cobra, a naga can expand the ribs in its neck, though not to create a hood. By contorting its muscles and ribs, the naga can simulate the appearance of a human face—albeit one covered in scales.

**Encounter:** Despite their vast wisdom and legions of worshipers, naga are not particularly well disposed toward human beings. They find the species savage and ruthless, and feel that only through several lifetimes of prayer and meditation can humans ever begin to truly understand the lessons the naga teach them. Consequently, naga do not react favorably to humans who are not part of their temple. A naga accosted in its sanctum automatically assumes that the strange humans wish it harm and reacts by trying to first separate the intruders, then dispatch them one at a time.

Using its telepathic powers of suggestion, the naga lures interlopers into the labyrinthine passages of its temple, waiting for one to be alone. When that opportunity arises, the naga uses *hunter's stare* to paralyze the target, then enwraps and constricts it. By the time the victim is able to react, it is too late to escape the naga's coils.

The naga has another attack, one it is loath to use: its poisonous bite. If the bite inflicts at least 1 point of primary damage, the naga's fangs inject its milky venom into the victim. This acts as a powerful neurotoxin, adding a +2 step penalty to the victim's Constitution feat check to resist its effects. The onset time is only a single round, after which the victim begins to suffer the effects of the venom, which last for the next 5 minutes. During that time the victim experiences

wild hallucinations and visions, suffering a +2 step penalty to all Awareness and INT-based checks.

**Habitat/Society:** There are nine naga in the world, almost all of which can be

found in remote temples in India, Pakistan, and Nepal. They have lived in these sanctuaries for centuries, tended by human servants to whom they impart the wisdom only millennia-old creatures can.

This wisdom is dispensed in venom from the fangs of the naga. One ounce of this substance, known as "naga milk," when properly prepared and imbibed, grants a human the ESP psionic broad skill for d6+6 hours, and one ESP specialty skill for half that time. The specialty skill to be granted must be *empathy*, *precognition*, or *psychometry*, and the choice is up to the naga—though it does entertain suitably humble requests. Many of the naga's human servants live their entire lives waiting for a taste of naga milk but never touch a single drop.

The naga are particularly susceptible to fluctuations in the level of dark matter; when it is exceptionally low, they enter a kind of hibernation. Their sleep can last centuries, during which time their followers wait faithfully for the reawakening of their divine masters.

When a naga first awakes it sheds its old skin, a process that requires several days. During this time and for approximately two weeks afterward, the naga is particularly vulnerable, having effectively no armor and only half its usual Strength. Legends among followers say that in times past, ruthless individuals took advantage of the naga's weakness and forced them to give up their milk. The legends further state that these people were driven irrevocably mad by the precognitive dreams they suffered.

**Adventure Hook:** The heroes are assigned to journey to a remote temple in India and ask for an audience with the temple's master, a supposedly 10,000-year-old monk named Ananta. They are told the monk is expecting them, but when the heroes arrive, the temple worshipers tell them that "evil men" arrived and carried off their "lord" Ananta in a flying





machine. The worshipers beg the heroes to find their master and bring him home.

The heroes return to civilization to learn that a Pakistani industrialist had been searching the area in a helicopter that matches the description of the flying machine—but that he has since traveled on to Nepal. Giving chase, the heroes discover that the Pakistani is seeking the reputed temples of the nine naga, apparently in a scheme to milk their venom for his own use. He already has one (if Ananta is in fact a naga) and is well equipped enough to capture more.

Do the heroes believe the naga myth? Will they try to stop the industrialist? Or will his ambition bring about his own end? And if they do save the naga, will the heroes be rewarded with its milk?

## Reiko

Japanese folklore tells of *henge*, animal spirits capable of transforming into humans, often to work mischief. A common type of *henge* is the *kitsune*, or fox. Like all *henge*, some *kitsune* are good, some evil, and others are simply what they are, caring little for human distinctions of morality. A perfect example of the last type is the *reiko*—the ghost fox.

**Description:** Reiko are masters of illusion, able to create complex images that behave as though they were the real things being mimicked. Most often they disguise themselves as beautiful women, but another favorite trick is to turn the most dilapidated hovel into a marvelous dwelling fit for nobility. Any of a reiko's illusions are dispelled when the reiko is destroyed. (See the "Reiko Illusions" sidebar for more information.)

The reiko can appear as an ordinary (though somewhat pale) fox, a beautiful woman, or an *otherwise* beautiful woman with the head of a fox. In any of these forms, the spirit can converse normally and generally has a pleasant speaking voice.

**Encounter:** A reiko rarely shows itself to humans—until they offend or intrude on its territory, thus deserving punishment. Once it has decided to torment a human, the spirit uses its powers to disguise its true appearance, the better to lead the presumptuous one to his or her own downfall.

A reiko in a fight normally uses Illusion magic to create a distraction, then flee. But if it has no other choice, it exhales goutts of flame up to 3 meters in length from its nostrils, or more likely, bites its opponent. This is not to say that a reiko enjoys combat, however. In fact, if it can be made to understand



that a human has suffered enough (requiring a successful Interaction check opposed by the reiko's Resolve), it relents. Similarly, if a reiko is shown that its actions make it no better than the people it is punishing (an Interaction check opposed by the reiko's Intelligence), it immediately desists—and sometimes offers a significant fortune as compensation.

**Habitat/Society:** Reiko are just one among hundreds of different *henge*, extradimensional creatures that have made the Earth their home for several centuries. With the last great tide of dark matter, the *henge* arrived in large numbers throughout Asia, many of them choosing to settle in the hills and mountains of Japan.

As might be expected, cohabitation between humans and *henge* was not entirely trouble-free. Although many of the



spirits worked to establish favorable relations with their new neighbors, large numbers of them considered humanity to be animals—unusually bright animals, but also extremely dangerous ones. Some henge (the reiko among them) delighted in baiting humans, especially proud, arrogant, or aggressive men. The reiko were among the first to discover that humans taste good, too.

For centuries, reiko preyed upon men, deceiving them with clever lies and illusions, living among them in disguise, and occasionally devouring the most delectable. Naturally long-lived, a spirit would periodically fake its own death, then reappear disguised as someone new. This trick also worked when a reiko was in danger of being exposed; many humans would be surprised to learn that the “evil spirit” they burned alive was nothing more than an illusion-shrouded straw dummy.

In modern times, the reiko carry on their tradition of making men miserable, posing as the worst caricatures of women: shrewish wives, ruthless executives, domineering in-laws, and so forth. They are particularly fond of attacking men where it hurts the most—their wallets. As human ambition has changed from power and land to power and money, reiko take every opportunity to turn fortunes to dust. Sadly for humans, reiko see no real difference between hoarding a fortune and saving a crust of bread, and sometimes their victims do not deserve the torment.

Curiously, though, ruining human lives isn't the driving goal of reiko, who prefer to simply exist. But the attitudes and egotism that most humans find annoying in their fellows, the reiko find intolerable—and they're equipped to do something about it.

## Reiko Illusions

Reiko, like all kitsune, use illusions to accomplish most of their ends. Illusion magic is fully covered in *Beyond Science: A Guide to FX*, but the abilities most commonly used by reiko are detailed below.

The art of illusion involves manipulating light and sound to produce artificial images and noises. Beginners at this craft can normally affect only a small area and are limited in the illusions they can create, but as their expertise increases they are able to affect progressively larger spaces and create incredibly complex simulations.

While Illusion magic requires no physical trappings, having a model to work from greatly simplifies the procedure for crafting an illusion. For example, a reiko wishing to create the image of a demon enjoys a -1 step bonus to the spell skill check if it had a picture or sculpture on hand to use as a model. Having an actual demon present to base the illusion on increases this bonus to -2 steps.

Interestingly, spells of Illusion magic can be combined and invoked at the same time. Thus, while visual and auditory effects are caused by two different spells, a reiko can

cast them as part of the same action and generate both effects simultaneously. Doing this carries no penalty, although each spell's FX energy cost must be paid. Essentially, the separate effects combine into a single spell.

Illusions are effective only against things that can perceive them. The most realistic image in the world cannot convince someone who can't see, for example, and creatures that rely heavily on scent, such as dogs, are not fooled as easily as those that primarily rely on sight. However, as this sort of arcane FX manipulates light and sound instead of minds, it is effective against anything that uses sight or hearing, including cameras and other sorts of electronic recording devices.

## Reiko Game Data

|                                  |         |                          |          |
|----------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|----------|
| STR 7                            | (d4+5)  | INT 15                   | (2d4+10) |
| DEX 13                           | (2d4+8) | WIL 13                   | (2d4+8)  |
| CON 8                            | (2d4+3) | PER 12                   | (2d4+7)  |
| Durability: 8/8/4/4              |         | Action check: 15+/14/7/3 |          |
| Move: sprint 40, run 26, walk 12 |         | #Actions: 2              |          |
| Reaction score: Ordinary/2       |         | Last resorts: 2          |          |
| FX energy points: 15             |         |                          |          |

### Attacks

|         |        |                 |      |
|---------|--------|-----------------|------|
| Unarmed | 11/5/2 | d4-1s/d4s/d4+1s | LI/O |
| Bite    | 11/5/2 | d4s/d4w/d4+2w   | LI/O |
| Breath  | 13/6/3 | d6s/d4+1w/d4+3w | En/O |

### Defenses

- +1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
- +3 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
- +2 resistance modifier vs. magical attacks

### Skills

Athletics [7]—*jump* [9]; Unarmed [7]—*brawl* [11]; Acrobatics [13]—*daredevil* [15], *dodge* [15]; Manipulation [13]—*pick-pocket* [14], *prestidigitation* [16]; Stealth [13]—*hide* [15], *shadow* [14], *sneak* [15]; Movement [8]; Stamina [8]—*endurance* [10]; Survival [8]; Knowledge [15]—*language (Japanese)* [16]; Animal Handling [13]; Awareness [13]—*intuition* [15]; Investigate [13]—*search* [14], *track* [15]; Resolve [13]—*physical* [15]; Deception [12]—*bluff* [16], *gamble* [16]; Interaction [12]—*charm* [14], *seduce* [15], *taunt* [14].

### FX Skills

Arcane Magic (Illusion)—*clamor* [16], *everyman* [18], *moving pictures* [16], *programmed response* [17], *static image* [17].



## Clamor

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell creates sound by causing vibrations in the area of effect. The sound could be as simple as a single tone or as complex as intelligent speech.

Multiple sounds can be created within the same area, but unless developed carefully, they are likely to overlap each other and become unintelligible. Sounds cannot be silenced with this spell, but sounds of equal or higher quality can be used to conceal them.

This spell can create sounds up to 30 meters away from the caster. The effects last 1 hour per degree of success of the skill check.

## Everyman

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell allows a reiko to create a disguise for itself or another person, including anthropomorphic robots, dead bodies, store mannequins, and the like. Initially, the spell can alter only the basic features of a target such as eye/hair/skin color, general build, facial features, and so on. A specific individual cannot be emulated, although the target's features can be altered to resemble those of a particular person, giving a +1 step penalty for every degree of success to any Awareness-*perception* checks to see through the disguise. Thus, a reiko could appear as a female human with any combination of eye and hair color, clothing, and so on.

The illusion follows the target's movements, so a disguise of formal wear on a person clad in a bathing suit would bend and wrinkle in the appropriate places. The spell could also conceal or give the appearance of having scars, physical deformities, and so on—though reiko rarely include these in their appearance.

The spell produces no auditory effects, so a careful observer may notice that the illusionary formal wear doesn't rustle as it moves, a voice might not match the concealed individual's apparent form, and so forth. The spell only affects visible light, so an infrared, radio, or sonar scan would reveal the true form if it is radically different from the illusionary one, a heat-scan would not register heat for a dead body or mannequin, and so on.

The spell lasts 1 hour per degree of success of the skill check.

## Moving Pictures

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell creates visual illusions that can duplicate motion in real time to create realistic movement within the area of effect. Thus, the reiko could make an illusion of a wall of fire, a person typing, or a speeding automobile. The illusion appears real, although it stops moving if the reiko stops paying attention to it.

The spell lasts 1 hour per degree of success of the skill check and affects 2 cubic meters within a range of 30 meters. The minimum reasonable dimension of the illusion's area is .1 meter (10 centimeters). While objects smaller than this can be shaped, the reiko cannot "stretch" the illusionary area to .01 meters by 10 meters by 20 meters to create a huge wall, for example.

## Programmed Response

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell does nothing by itself, but it adds a set of programmed instructions to a *clamor* or *moving pictures* spell (and rarely, to *static image* or *everyman*), causing the spell it affects to continue its actions without the reiko's concentration. Thus a wall of fire would continue to blaze, an illusionary person would continue to type, and a vehicle image would continue its motion, even if the reiko stopped paying attention or left the area.

*Programmed response* repeats a single default action for the illusion. The spell has the range, area, and duration of whatever spells it is linked to.

## Static Image

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This simple spell creates a visual illusion of a nonmoving object such as a wall, a one-piece weapon, a body, or a vehicle. The reiko can alter the image to give the appearance of motion, but the perceived motion occurs in a jerky fashion at one "frame" of animation per phase. Anyone viewing this very rough animation has a -3 step bonus to any rolls made to realize that it is an artificial image.

The spell's duration, area of effect, and maximum change in illumination are identical with those of the *moving pictures* spell.



# Australia

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AUSTRALIA

While the Australian outback remains mostly untouched by the march of civilization, a great many xenoforms show up in the populated areas of the continent. The most commonly reported are the bunyip and its traditional enemy, the outback dragon.

**Description:** Were the bunyip to possess just half the physical characteristics ascribed to it—wings, horns, claws, tusks, trunk, fur, scales, fins, and so on—it would resemble a mythical chimera. But the description most commonly agreed upon reports it as comparable to the diprotodont, a sort of prehistoric kangaroo, except that it walks on all fours, is 2 meters high at the shoulder and 3.5 meters long, and weighs in the vicinity of 2,000 to 3,000 kilograms. This makes it one of the largest land mammals in the world, just after the Indian rhinoceros.

The most striking feature of the bunyip is its lower jaw, from which its teeth protrude almost straight out. Though not particularly sharp, the bunyip's teeth are its best weapons. It is able to deliver amazingly painful bites.

**Encounter:** The bunyip may be an evolutionary holdover rather than a supernatural creature, as many believe, but it is a formidable beast nonetheless.



## Bunyip

'Canberra, this is Romeo Alpha Sierra nine-five-zed! We're 150 kilo—bloody hell! Dave, help me stop the bleeding! Canberra, we're 150 kilometers east—northeast of Wagga Wagga, and we need help! Something attacked us! Like a giant 'roo! Wagner's dead and Hutchens is bleeding badly. I think my leg is broken, and . . . oh. Oh, no. Canberra . . . I think it's coming ba—'

Though a herbivore, it is extremely defensive and viciously attacks any creature that moves within 50 meters of it.

When approached, the bunyip utters a menacing noise somewhere between a growl and a moo. The sound is disturbing enough that smaller beasts readily flee, while larger creatures must make a successful *Resolve-mental resolve* skill check to remain in the area (though headlong flight is not necessary on a failed check). Anything that remains after this initial display is in trouble. The bunyip charges, bellowing, intent on knocking its foe to the ground. But if its opponent takes the opportunity to flee, the bunyip does likewise, having no particular desire to press the issue.

Wicked blows buffet those who stay to fight it out with the bunyip. The bunyip's claws aren't particularly sharp—or even long—but its powerful limbs can break bones. And since the



beast's objective is to drive away the intruder, it often continues to attack a target that keeps moving, even when those movements are only post-mortem muscle spasms.

**Habitat/Society:** A bunyip is always part of a small family, usually consisting of a mated pair and one child. When the parents produce another offspring, the previous child departs to seek a mate. As a result, no more than three buniyps are ever encountered together. And because the bunyip does all its foraging more or less alone, rarely do humans encounter more than one.

A bunyip is active only in the late evening through early morning, which is usually when its lowing call is heard. During the day, the creature takes advantage of cool lakes and streams, in whose waters it can rest unmolested—and unnoticed. With its prodigious ability to hold its breath (a +3 step bonus to Stamina–endurance skill checks), the bunyip can remain submerged for quite some time, thus avoiding all but the most perceptive onlooker.

**Adventure Hook:** Australia is suddenly abuzz with speculation when an “Iron Man” sports team in the Great Dividing Range radios in a distress call, claiming they have been attacked by a giant monster. A rescue team sent to the area discovers the competitors’ mangled corpses, along with some curious bloody footprints leading away into the outback. By the time the rescuers return with the bodies, rumors are already spreading that the four-man athletic team was attacked by the legendary bunyip. Bounty hunters spread across the outback in search of the “athlete killer.”

## Bunyip Game Data

STR 18 (d6+15) INT 3 (Animal 6 or d6+3)  
DEX 8 (d4+6) WIL 10 (d6+7)  
CON 18 (d4+16) PER 4 (Animal 10 or d4+8)  
Durability: 18/18/9/9 Action check: 11+/10/5/2  
Move: sprint 30, run 20, walk 8, swim 12 #Actions: 3  
Reaction score: Marginal/1

### Attacks

Bite 18/9/4 d4+3s/d4+4s/d4+2w LI/O  
Paw (x2) 19/9/4 d6+2s/d6+3s/d6+2w LI/O

### Defenses

+4 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
no resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
Armor (Ordinary): d4 (LI), d4–1 (HI), d4–1 (En)

### Skills

Athletics [18]; Unarmed [18]; Stealth [8]–sneak [10]; Movement [18]–swim [26]; Stamina [18]–endurance [22]; Awareness [10]–perception [12]; Investigate [10]–search [12].

The heroes’ organization sends them out to follow the progress of the bounty hunters and hopefully bring back some evidence of the creature’s existence before it is killed. One of the bounty hunters is quite willing to let them come along—as long as they don’t demand a share of the reward or try to stop him from killing the monster. Deep in the outback, though, the hunter disappears, leaving the heroes on their own to face the beast.

Is the bounty hunter dead or pursuing some secret agenda? If the creature is really a bunyip, why is it so aggressively attacking humans? Can the heroes stop it without heavy artillery—or should they just run for their lives?

## Outback Dragon

GIANT LIZARDS SIGHTED SOUTH OF DARWIN STOP  
THINK MISSED SOME KINORI STOP IMMEDIATE  
RETURN REQUIRED STOP BARELY KEEPING OUT OF  
NEWS STOP BRING BIGGEST GUNS MESSAGE ENDS

**Description:** The outback dragon, *megalania prisca*, is the largest lizard humans have ever seen. It measures up to 6 meters long and weighs in at 600 kilograms or more, dwarfing the Komodo dragon, its nearest cousin. The lizard’s curved teeth are 2 centimeters long, with a serrated edge to tear meat off its kills.

In coloration, the monster is always a grayish-brown. Its eyes are a dull black, often described as cold or dead. Although it is surrounded by an overpowering stench (see below), the giant lizard can avoid casual notice by lying extremely still in tall grass or undergrowth, with its head low to the ground.

**Encounter:** Generally, the first sign of a *megalania prisca* is its odor. The stench is so strong that it confers a –1 step bonus to Awareness skill checks to notice the creature. Most local animals have learned to recognize the smell, and they flee the moment they sense it.

The giant lizard waits quietly for unaware prey to move close enough, then rushes forth to attack (sprint move). If the prey shows no sign of approaching, the lizard creeps closer until within range, then springs. Although its curved claws are particularly wicked, the beast prefers to tear gaping holes in the victim using its terrible jaws. The attack continues until the target stops moving or the lizard is killed—it is too persistent to admit defeat. Regardless of whether it is still under attack by other creatures, the giant lizard then snatches up the immobilized prey in its maw and runs away to finish the meal unmolested.

Even a victim who survives the immediate attack is not out of danger, though, for septic bacteria in the lizard’s saliva cause a virulent infection (Good strength and incubation).





Unless the wound is treated with Knowledge-*first aid* or Medical Science-*treatment* within d4 days, a character who has suffered at least 1 point of primary damage from the lizard's bite begins to succumb to the infection. Once the infection sets in, the victim must attempt a Constitution feat check at a +1 step penalty to recover. (For complete information about handling disease, see the Hazards section in Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action in the *Gamemaster Guide*.)

**Habitat/Society:** The outback dragon, assumed to have died out about nineteen thousand years ago, is alive and well and living in the Australian desert. Originally it preyed on large marsupial diprotodonts (known these days as bunyips) but was forced to alter its diet as the centuries rolled by and its accustomed prey became scarce. Fortunately for the big lizard, other species were becoming more plentiful—including humans.

More importantly, the outback dragon owes its continued existence to the kinori, who, intrigued by the possibilities, bred the giant carnivorous lizards to ensure they would survive. But when the kinori eventually abandoned the Australian continent, transporting the huge creatures proved to be a logistical nightmare. In frustration, they set



## Outback Dragon Game Data

STR 16 (d6+13) INT 1 (Animal 4 or d4+2)  
 DEX 8 (d4+6) WIL 9 (d4+7)  
 CON 18 (d6+15) PER 1 (Animal 4 or d4+2)  
 Durability: 18/18/9/9 Action check: 9+/8/4/2  
 Move: sprint 28, run 18, walk 6 #Actions: 3  
 Reaction score: Marginal/1

### Attacks

Claws 18/9/4 d4+2s/d4+1w/d4+3w LI/O  
 Bite 19/9/4 d6w/d6+3w/d4+1m LI/O  
 + infection (see text)

### Defenses

+4 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 no resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 Armor (Ordinary): d4 (LI), d4-1 (HI), d4-1 (En)

### Skills

Unarmed [16]; Stealth [8]-hide [9]; Stamina [18]-endurance [20]; Awareness [9]-intuition [11]; Resolve [9]-physical [14].

most of the lizards free, trusting that the species was hardy enough to endure until the kinori's return. They were right, though the population of giant lizards has dropped radically in the intervening centuries. Today, the creatures roam the outback, preying on anything unlucky enough to be caught in their path—though their favorite meal is still bunyip.

Fortunately for the nocturnal bunyips, the outback dragon hunts only during the day. Like all lizards, *megania prisca* is cold-blooded and so becomes extremely sluggish at night. Generally it spends this time sleeping but can take action at night if forced to do so, suffering a +2 step penalty to all checks. This penalty drops to +1 during twilight. Similarly, the creature's movement rate is halved at night or in cold weather.

**Adventure Hook:** When kinori are found in the sewers of Darwin, in Australia's Northern Territory, the heroes waded in to deal with the situation (in whatever manner they or their employer deems appropriate). But a few weeks later, reports surface of giant lizards in the area, with more than a few deaths blamed on them. The sightings are mostly concentrated south of the city—well away from any sufficiently large sewer openings—and are moving progressively farther south, as though the giant lizards were making for the wilderness. Complicating matters, some reports mention the giant lizards being herded by "reptile men," which suggests that the heroes failed to deal with all of the kinori in Darwin.

Did the heroes find all the kinori or not? Can they track down the giant lizards? And if so, can they find them before they kill anyone else?



# Europe/Near East

Many tales of xenofoms trace their origins back to stories told by Europeans during the Dark and Middle Ages. As Europe began to spread its influence to new lands—particularly the Americas—the sources of those stories also spread. Transplanted European xenofoms can now be found almost all over the world.

## Basilisk

The basilisk is a creature of European myth and legend. Unfortunately, a kernel of truth lies behind the myths. These lizards with the venomous fangs of snakes are efficient, cold-blooded predators that pose a significant danger to all who encounter them.

They may be related to the gila monsters of the American Southwest or to dinosaurs like *Estesia*, discovered by a team from the Mongolian Academy and the American Museum.

**Description:** Basilisks roughly resemble Komodo dragons in terms of size and general appearance (four legs, tails, scales,



### Basilisk Game Data

STR 13 (d8+8) INT 4 (Animal 13 or d4+11)  
DEX 8 (2d4+3) WIL 5 (d8)  
CON 13 (d8+8) PER 5 (d8)

Durability: 13/13/6/6 Action check: 13+/12/6/3

Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4, fly 0, easy swim 2, swim 4  
#Actions: 2

Reaction score: Ordinary/2

#### Attacks

Claws 13/6/3 d4+1s/d4+1w/d6+1w LI/O

Bite\* 13/6/3 d4+2w/d4+4w/d4+2m LI/O

"Gaze" 10/5/2 Paralytic poison

\* Poison

#### Defenses

no resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

no resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

Armor: d6-1 (LI), d6-4 (HI), d6-4 (EN)

#### Skills

Stealth [8]-hide [10], sneak [10]; Movement [10]-race [14];

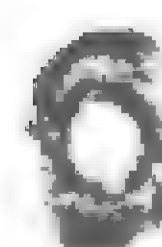
Stamina [13]-endurance [14]; Awareness [5]-perception [8];

Investigate [5]-track [10]; Resolve [5]-physical resolve [10].

and forked tongues). They are generally a dark brown color over most of their bodies, lightening to cream on their bellies. Some reports mention a greenish tint to the brown scales. Like snakes, their eyesight is poor but their abilities to detect variations in heat are excellent. Like other reptiles, basilisks are cold-blooded. They measure roughly 2.5 meters long, and mass roughly 400 kg. There are reports of considerably larger creatures in ancient documents, so it's possible that, like crocodiles, they grow as large as their environment can support.

In addition to their neurotoxin (insinuative, +2 penalty, onset time 1 minute, duration 5 minutes) injected through hollow fangs when biting, basilisks have a defense mechanism like that of spitting cobras. Basilisks spray venom (paralytic, contact, +3 penalty, onset time 1 round, duration 1 hour) from ducts below their eyes. Legends of a paralytic gaze no doubt spring from the delivery mechanism for the venom. Basilisks have a set of poison glands in their necks separate from those linked to their hollow fangs. The neck glands connect to muscular tubes that terminate at the basilisks' eyes, allowing them to spray the venom. Like spitting cobras, basilisks aim this venom at the victim's face, and the spray is quite accurate out to about 2.5 meters. All reports indicate that basilisks use this weapon only when very frightened, and immediately flee the area after using it.





**Encounter:** Heroes are most likely to encounter a basilisk while it is hunting for food. They hunt during the day, using the sun's heat to provide energy and assist with digestion. It is possible that heroes could stumble across a basilisk while it was simply sunning itself on a large rock. Like many snakes, basilisks are burrowing creatures, and may therefore pose a threat during any subterranean investigations.

**Habitat/Society:** Basilisks are solitary except when raising young. Heroes encountering a mother basilisk with her hatchlings should exercise extreme caution, since they are reputed to be very protective of their young.

Basilisks may appear anywhere that snakes also live. They are somewhat more common in the northern Mediterranean countries and in Europe, but have been reported as far East as Asia. To date there are no confirmed basilisk sightings in the Western Hemisphere. However, recently recovered records indicate that some Medieval European societies such as the Freemasons, the Rosicrucians, and the Knights of Malta actively bred basilisks and used them to protect their archives. This seems to indicate that, like snakes, basilisks can become accustomed to human presence if handled by humans from shortly after birth. If the societies that once actively bred them continue to do so, heroes may encounter them anywhere those societies have influence.

Basilisks lay three to five eggs in a clutch once every three years. Basilisk nests resemble those of crocodiles, using heat provided by the sun and by rotting vegetation to warm the eggs. It takes twelve months for the eggs to hatch. The temperature of the egg determines the gender of the infant after approximately nine months. Female basilisks remain near their nests, hunting the area extensively, until the eggs hatch. Newborn basilisks are quite small, roughly the size of a man's forearm. The hatchlings remain with their mother for twelve to eighteen months after hatching, after which time both sets of venom glands are fully developed.

**Adventure Hook:** Heroes receive an assignment to travel to the Brazilian rain forest and investigate reports of a strange, lizardlike creature interfering with logging operations. In addition to the natural hazards of the tropical rain forest, heroes must deal with the antipathy of the logging company as well. Both management and workers consider Americans as interfering busybodies who limit the economic growth of their company and country. Heroes may well encounter "accidents" while in the logging camp for interviews. They should be able to acquire eyewitness accounts and medical records of those paralyzed by the creature.

All the attacks occurred at the farthest west extension of the camp, beyond the area of active logging. At some point the heroes will either successfully track down the creature, or they'll stumble across its owners. If they find the creature, they notice that it wears a leather harness around its forelegs and neck. Its owners are in an encampment a few miles

farther west. They are the children and grandchildren of Nazis who escaped to this place with the help of ODESSA. Their families trace their lineage back to medieval German "wizards," and they are performing occult research at this location. They actively breed basilisks according to the old family tradition, and use one to scare people away from the area.

## Gargoyle

The gargoyle is not a natural creature but rather the result of alchemy. Near the end of the Dark Ages, a pious alchemist named Alonso del Adriacchi created a unique homunculus of stone. His first effort was crude and ill-formed, but the alchemical process worked: He had breathed life into stone itself! Over time his creations became more sophisticated, becoming intelligent and taking on more of the motive force of life itself. Carved into fierce-looking shapes designed to terrify even demonic evil away from places of worship and eternal peace, these gargoyles were Alonso's greatest gift to Holy Mother Church.

The Church did not receive well his forays into the arcane, however. A monk named Giancomo Donato initiated an inquiry into Alonso's arcane studies. Far from wanting to dabble into matters forbidden by the Church fathers, Alonso dedicated his efforts to using his creations to defend against evil influences. He argued before the Church hierarchy that giving them the

### Gargoyle Game Data

|   |    |        |                          |    |        |
|---|----|--------|--------------------------|----|--------|
| STR                                     | 13 | (d6+9) | INT                      | 8  | (d4+5) |
| DEX                                     | 8  | (d4+5) | WIL                      | 11 | (d4+8) |
| CON                                     | 13 | (d6+9) | PER                      | 6  | (d4+3) |
| Durability: 13/13/7/7                   |    |        | Action check: 11+/10/5/2 |    |        |
| Move: sprint 18, run 12, walk 4, fly 36 |    |        | #Actions: 3              |    |        |
| Reaction score: Marginal/1              |    |        | Last resorts: 0          |    |        |

#### Attacks

Unarmed 14/7/3 d4+2s/d4+2w/d6+2w LI/O

#### Defenses

+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
no resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
+1 resistance modifier vs. WIL encounter skills  
Armor: d6+2 (LI), d4 (HI), d4+1 (En)

#### Skills

Athletics [11]—*climb* [12], *jump* [12]; Unarmed Attack [11]—*brawl* [14]; Acrobatics [8]—*flight* [10]; Stamina [13]—*endurance* [15]; Awareness [11]—*perception* [14]; Investigate [11]—*search* [14].



faces of monsters served to scare off infernal minions and ward sacred places against the demons' human agents. With the support of a Belgian Cardinal named Vitrik, the Church relented.

Soon, the churches of northern Italy and southern France became dotted with bestial waterspouts that were in fact gargoyles. The Church could hardly forbid the use of these clever creations to ward off the evils that threatened their most sacred places, so they allowed Alonso to continue his work and to take on apprentices. Through these apprentices, the art of creating gargoyles to protect Church sites continued until the 14th century, when the Inquisition burned the documents that contained the alchemical formulae used to create these creatures. Like many other arcanists, the alchemists who crafted the gargoyles were persecuted by the Inquisitors, and their secrets went with them to their graves. Today, the art is lost.

**Description:** The gargoyle stands about the height of a large man. Its arms are proportionally longer than those of a human being, giving it an incongruous appearance. Each gargoyle has individual features; these features depended on the skill and artistic talent of the stonecutter employed by the artificer. Some of the oldest ones today appear indistinct, their physiognomy worn by time. Others have better withstood the rigors of the centuries and are in much better condition.

Some gargoyles have wings, using the flying rate listed above.

**Encounter:** As only arcane means may determine whether a stone gargoyle adorning a building is "alive" or just a statue, gargoyles are difficult to find. Most remain in western Europe, but some have been shipped as part of dismantled buildings or even art collections overseas to North America. Heroes may encounter a gargoyle during a routine investigation which takes them to a holy site or even a public building adorned by gargoyles purchased from dismantled Church buildings, the construction crew unaware of the gargoyle's true nature. Most such encounters are not violent, unless the heroes engage in an act of desecration or outright evil.

**Habitat/Society:** Most commonly associated with medieval churches and cathedrals, the gargoyle has served as a guardian of other locations as well. Gargoyles watch over many European mausoleums and cemeteries, guarding the consecrated ground that shrouds the dead. They seem to require no sustenance of any kind, and their vigilance is constant. In some cases, several gargoyles have been placed to watch over a particular holy site, but there is no obvious sense of community among them.

**Adventure Hook:** Eureka! Someone has discovered Alonso del Adriacchi's formulae for creating the animus for



sgargoyles! At least, that's what Martín Valdosta, a senior researcher for the Hoffman Institute claims. But there's a twist: a powerful diabolist named Vincent Cherniér has rediscovered the process.

The Institute wants to steal this formula from Cherniér's Orléans villa, and they have assigned the hero team to do this. The Gamemaster should draw up a small villa to represent Cherniér's residence. Use the Good law enforcer template from the *Gamemaster Guide* for the four guards that watch the grounds and the villa itself. Cherniér uses other guardians as well; the Gamemaster should feel free to add whatever supernatural minions appropriate to challenge the heroes.

In addition, the Gamemaster could add the following complications: Another group seeking the formula for their own purposes (another magical society, a group of druids, the Church?) also executes a raid on the manor. This could coincide with the heroes' intrusion into the manor, or this team could have preceded them by several days, thereby turning the break-in into more of an investigation.



An interesting twist might be to add a group of gargoyles themselves. The gargoyles have heard of Cherniér's forays into the arcane secrets discovered by Alonso, and they want to stop him from perverting the original purpose of the gargoyles. Some among them also hope to find Alonso's original notes and give them to a master alchemist of good heart so as to propagate their species.

As always, the Gamemaster must determine to what extent the recovery of old magical texts affects the present era of the game. If an increase in the gargoyle population does not adversely affect the campaign, then the Gamemaster could easily allow the heroes an opportunity to ally with these strange creatures in recovering Alonso's text. Depending on how well the heroes deal with the gargoyles, they may even approach the Hoffman Institute to help with their problem. This represents an optimal solution for both groups: The Hoffman Institute will have the text, and the gargoyles can continue their role as guardians (albeit of both sacred and secular sites).

## Gorgon

### Gorgon Game Data

STR 9 (d12+3) INT 9 (d12+3)

DEX 9 (d12+3) WIL 9 (d12+3)

CON 9 (d12+3) PER 9 (d12+3)

Durability: 9/9/4/5

Action check: 10+/9/4/2

Move: sprint 18, run 12, walk 4

#Actions: 2

Reaction score: Marginal/1

Last resorts: 1

#### Attacks

Claws\* 4/2/1 d4+1s/d4+1w/d6+1w LI/O

Poison see below

\* +d4 base die

#### Defenses

no resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

no resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

Armor: None, may wear normal equipment.

#### Skills

Those few gorgons who survive, sanity intact, to adulthood have the following skills: Athletics [9]; Vehicle Op [9], Stealth [9]—*hide* [12], Stamina [9]; Knowledge [9]; Awareness [9]; Interaction [9], Survival, Investigate—*search* [11], *track* [11].

A more experienced gorgon has, in addition to higher levels in these skills, Modern Ranged Weapons and Survival—*survival training* for the appropriate terrain.



'Is anyone there? Damn voice mail. Get this message to A.D. Calvin: The mirrored goggles don't work. The next . . . team . . . needs . . . gas . . . mas . . .' <click>

Greek myths about the gorgons are attempts by that ancient culture to explain something they couldn't understand: A recessive gene that causes a mutation. All evidence suggests the maternal chromosomes carry the recessive gene, and it reappears approximately every twentieth generation. There is no evidence to support the immortality of Euryale and Stheno, the famed Medusa's sisters. It's possible that survivors of gorgon encounters over the generations simply assumed they were encountering the same individuals from earlier tales and explained that with immortality.

**Description:** Gorgons are always female. They are hairless, with a mass of snakelike tendrils on their heads. Genetic expression deforms their faces, making them hideous to behold. Myths about wings may refer to cloaks used to disguise their inhuman features.

**Encounter:** Heroes are most likely to encounter a gorgon just after her mutant gene expresses itself. The gorgon will likely be confused and distressed. Because she won't understand her abilities yet, heroes should consider her extremely dangerous.



If a group of players is willing to put up with a gorgon in their company and the constant need for protective gas masks, the Gamemaster may choose to allow it. Gorgons are mutants with assigned mutations. Effectively, they have one Amazing and two Good advantageous mutations: Poison Attack, for their inhaled paralytic; Acid Touch for their insinuating neurotoxin; and Natural Attack for their claws. These must be offset by points of mutant drawbacks.

Adult gorgons typically manipulate situations so that any encounter occurs on their home territory. They attempt to lure normal humans into enclosed spaces, where their paralytic secretion becomes more concentrated over time and thus more effective (+2 step penalty to check).

In addition to being well armed with claws, gorgons possess two special, poisonous attacks. The first is a contact neurotoxin delivered by their claws (insinuating, +2 penalty to Constitution feat check, onset time 30 seconds, duration 6 hours). The second is an inhaled paralytic (inhaled, +1 penalty to Constitution feat check, onset time 1 minute, duration 6 hours). The paralytic agent is a natural secretion related to pheromones. It causes the muscles to stiffen in their current position, and the victim's skin tone becomes gray as blood circulation slows. Gorgons have a natural immunity to their own, and each other's, toxins.

**Habitat/Society:** Gorgons may appear anywhere humans can live. The original Greek bloodline has spread all over the world in the present day.

Gorgons who develop their powers in infancy or childhood rarely survive to adults. Their communities cannot survive a gorgon in their midst and usually kill the child. Those who develop their powers in adolescence or menopause are often driven mad by the experience as they kill all those close to them. The very few who survive to understand their powers generally flee into isolation, avoiding all but accidental contact with their fellow humans.

**Adventure Hook:** Players receive an assignment to capture a live gorgon. The catch is, no one knows where she is. Her existence is assumed based on hospital reports of a young woman's disappearance. The hospital admitted Petra Nicolette for a high fever and startling hair loss. The reports document her transformation into a gorgon. She disappeared from the hospital shortly after the first deaths in her ward. The only lead is a severed hand found by local police after residents reported sounds of a fight in a neighboring apartment. The hand shows signs of infection by gorgon toxins. Police identified the hand as belonging to a local Mafia soldier, Anthony "Nose" Nostrano.

While the players investigate Petra's past associations, a crime war breaks out on the streets and more deaths attributable to a gorgon occur. Petra's past includes a drunken, abusive father and mother who left them after Petra's birth. Gamemasters may choose for Petra to be the gorgon assassin working for a local Mob family, in which case her background builds her in to the kind person whose transformation would push her over the line into psychosis.

Alternately, there may be two gorgons, Petra and the Mob killer. In that case, Petra's background should build sympathy for the poor, lost young woman with this terrible power that isolates her from human contact. Players can choose whether to turn poor Petra over to their employer, or to stop the mob war by capturing the Mob assassin and turning her over to their employer.

## Harpy

Two and a half millennia ago, the kinori engaged in a short, fierce war with a race of short, winged humanoids with a reptilian cast to their features. Through a combination of arcane magic and superior technology, the kinori defeated their foes in short order, leaving only a few scattered remnants. And since the survivors chose to scavenge supplies and sustenance from mankind, the kinori were content to let their winged foes' race slowly die out on Earth. Mankind came to name these creatures after their habit of carrying off the unwary, naming them "snatchers," or in the native Greek: harpies.

**Description:** Rather than becoming extinct so many centuries in the past as the kinori had hoped, harpies interbred with mankind (forcibly, since humans were not predisposed to mating with horrible monsters). The result was something more human, but still recognizably alien. Still, concealing clothing and makeup could more or less disguise a harpy, albeit as a short, stooped, extremely ugly woman—even the harpy males. Under their disguises they are bent, leathery creatures, with only patchy hair and almost vestigial wings. Their eyes are human, though a bit jaundiced, and their bodies reek like old sewage. Some wear sunglasses to hide their eyes, and all wear copious amounts of perfume to hide their stench.

**Encounter:** Harpies walk among mankind, gathering in small packs, carefully picking out suitable victims. They have three methods of hunting: the first is the rarest, the "old way" of doffing their disguises and flapping through the night sky, seeking anyone suitably isolated and carrying them off. The second is to instigate discord with their keen Interaction skills, badgering men into fighting (which often leaves a corpse to scavenge) or to part ways (which provides a victim to hunt in the aforementioned "old way").





The final method is to use arcane magic to lure victims right to them. Their abilities mimic the Arcane Magic skill Mesmerism (see *Beyond Science: A Guide to FX*), specifically *emotion* and *forgetfulness*, both of which are outlined below:

**Emotion:** (Transform spell; 1 FX energy point) Harpies use their alien vocal cords to subtly affect men's minds, creating rage or love—either to sow discord or to attract unsuspecting victims. With an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success in this skill, the harpy gains a -1, -2, or -3 step bonus to any of its attempts to use Interaction skills. After one hour, the subject's emotions quickly drift back to their original state, at which time the subject can attempt a Resolve-*mental resolve* skill check to realize that his or her emotions were artificially altered.

**Forgetfulness:** (Transform spell; 1 FX energy point) Harpies do not always slay their victims, and so use this ability to cause the subject to forget what happened in the preceding 10 minutes. The subject's memories are hazy and dreamlike, at best; the harpy removes the emotional attachment to the events, making them seem "unreal." This ability requires a Good complex skill check to work (5 successes, 1 check per phase), and the target must remain within 2 meters of the mesmerist throughout. Repeated successful uses extend the time of forgetfulness. For example, two successful attempts

result in the loss of 20 minutes of memory. Harpies generally assign one of their number to each victim they intend to allow to survive—which means in most cases only one harpy.

**Habitat/Society:** Despite being dedicated carnivores, harpies do not always slay their victims. Indeed, their program of "animal husbandry" continues as it has done for the past 2,500 years, with each generation of harpies slightly more human than the last. Many victims are carried off or lured to isolated locations, where they are lulled by arcane magic into assisting the harpies in their scheme.

Those human victims released from the "nest" are generally confused and disoriented, but still capable—with sufficient rest—of continuing. Harpies only grudgingly release them when they are no longer able to devote resources to keeping the human docile while he or she is in captivity.

The product of these foul unions is almost always oviparous—meaning the child is hatched, rather than born. Therefore it is exceedingly rare for harpies to allow one of their young to be "delivered" anywhere but in the nest.

## Harpy Game Data

|                              |    |         |                          |    |         |
|------------------------------|----|---------|--------------------------|----|---------|
| STR                          | 8  | (2d4+3) | INT                      | 8  | (2d4+3) |
| DEX                          | 12 | (2d6+4) | WIL                      | 12 | (2d6+4) |
| CON                          | 9  | (2d4+4) | PER                      | 12 | (2d6+4) |
| Durability: 9/9/5/5          |    |         | Action check: 11+/10/5/2 |    |         |
| Move: run 12, walk 4, fly 40 |    |         | #Actions: 2              |    |         |
| Reaction score: Marginal/1   |    |         |                          |    |         |
| FX energy points: 5          |    |         | Last resorts: 1          |    |         |

### Attacks

|        |        |               |      |
|--------|--------|---------------|------|
| Talons | 10/5/2 | d4s/d4+1s/d4w | LI/O |
|--------|--------|---------------|------|

### Defenses

no resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 +1 resistance modifier vs WIL encounter skills  
 Armor (Ordinary): d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d4-1 (En)

### Skills

Athletics [8]-*climb* [10]; Unarmed [8]-*brawl* [10]; Acrobatics [12]-*fall* [13], *flight* [13]; Stealth [12]; Stamina [9]; Survival [9]-*training (hills)* [10]; Knowledge [8]; Awareness [12]-*perception* [13]; Interaction [12]-*charm* [13], *intimidate* [14], *taunt* [14].

### FX Skills

Arcane Magic (Mesmerism)-*emotion* [16], *forgetfulness* [12].



They are also raised in the nest, where they are taught local human language and customs, the use of their abilities, and the grand scheme of the harpies—including their role in it. When the time comes, young harpies are escorted out into the world of men to begin to acclimate, and taken on their first real hunting missions within a few months. Within a few years, they begin making periodic trips back to the nest, where they help to propagate their race.

**Adventure Hook:** Migrant farm workers begin disappearing from an Arizona farm, creating a profound sense of unease. The largely illegal alien workers suspect their employer is doing something to them, while the farm boss suspects that they are secretly running away—ruining his investment in their citizenship.

Things become more confusing when one of the missing workers shows up again, in a daze, unable to recall anything except fear and torture. Local police investigate, then call on contacts in the Hoffmann Institute to help out. The worker's tale relates how a group of old hags carried him off on broomsticks and savaged him day and night.

Meanwhile, the workers continue to accuse their erstwhile benefactor of murdering the missing workers as part of some diabolical ritual, and violent incidents are beginning to occur. The farm boss is exceedingly reluctant to call in the authorities—knowing he will be arrested for smuggling illegal immigrants from Mexico—and begs the Hoffmann agents to solve things quickly and quietly.

Are things deteriorating so badly because some of the workers are secretly harpies, masquerading as older female workers? Are the fierce arguments and violent incidents their doing? Or is the farm boss actually working for the harpies—whether he knows it or not? Either way, things are going to spiral badly out of control, and the workers will riot if a culprit is not found and punished soon.

## Werewolf (Lycanthrope)

"This is the classic 'wolfman.' But make no mistake: This isn't just somebody's pet gone feral. It's a two-legged killing machine, and you're a big bag of kibble waiting to be torn open and gobbled up.

"If you see one, kill it. If you become one, ask somebody else to kill you."

—Hoffmann Institute  
*Special Operations Manual*

**Description:** The lycanthropic werewolf is the familiar beast of horror movies, a human with lupine features: snout, fangs, fur, claws. Its legs are jointed like a dog's and end in paws. Its arms are built like a human's, however, with humanlike hands—though they end in vicious claws.

As werewolves, lycanthropes are only slightly larger than their human form. Their fur tends to be colored the same as their natural human hair color.

**Encounter:** The lycanthrope always hunts alone. Its sole intent is to hunt, kill, and sate its ravenous hunger. Since the beast eats only once a month, its appetite can be awesome.

Like a regular wolf, a werewolf hunts by locating likely prey (the weak or helpless) and following it until the prey is alone. The werewolf then pounces, pinning the prey with one claw while it slashes with the other and bites. Its goal is a quick kill, and it attacks until either it or its victim is dead. If chased away somehow, the beast attempts to return as soon as possible to finish the job. The werewolf's claws and fangs carry the disease of lycanthropy, but it has no interest in—or indeed, awareness of—the possibility of spreading the infection. Its attacks are purely out of hunger.

True to the legends, silver weapons are the most effective deterrents to lycanthropes. The mere touch of silver is mildly painful, and silver that actually causes damage is unaffected by the werewolf's defenses. However, this is only true of

### Lycanthrope Game Data

|                                 |         |                          |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|
| STR 16                          | (d6+13) | INT 8                    | (d4+6)  |
| DEX 11                          | (d4+9)  | WIL 12                   | (d4+10) |
| CON 14                          | (d6+11) | PER 6                    | (d4+4)  |
| Durability: 18/18/9/9           |         | Action check: 15+/14/7/3 |         |
| Move: sprint 30, run 20, walk 8 |         | #Actions: 3              |         |
| Reaction score: Ordinary/2      |         | Last resorts: 1          |         |

#### Attacks

|         |        |                   |      |
|---------|--------|-------------------|------|
| Unarmed | 16/8/4 | d4+3s/d4+4s/d4+5s | LI/O |
| Bite    | 16/8/4 | d6s/d4+1w/d4+2w   | LI/O |
| Claws   | 18/9/4 | d4+2s/d4w/d4+1w   | LI/O |

#### Defenses

+4 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 Armor: (Ordinary) d6 (LI)\*, d6-1 (HI)\*, d6-1 (En)

\* The werewolf receives no defense against silver weapons.

#### Skills

Athletics [16]—*jump* [17]; Unarmed Attack [16]; Stealth [11]—*shadow* [12]; Movement [14]—*race* [15]; Stamina [14]—*endurance* [16]; Survival [14]; Knowledge [8]—*deduce* [9]; Awareness [12]—*intuition* [15], *perception* [13]; Investigate [12]—*track* [13]; Resolve [12]—*physical* [16].





lycanthropic werewolves; shapechangers (see next entry) do not suffer the same drawback.

**Habitat/Society:** Lycanthropy strikes only those who have been “infected” by the bite of another lycanthrope (see the “Curse of Lycanthropy” sidebar). If the victim survives, he or she faces a lifetime plagued by periodic bouts of memory loss, psychotic episodes, and extreme emotional stress. Some embrace their transformation and the sense of freedom it brings. But for most it is the single most traumatic period in their lives, and few survive long enough to “adjust.”

Lycanthropes tend to live alone for fear that they might accidentally kill someone who means something to them. They also tend to hunt alone in wolf form, mainly because there are so few of them: Almost no one survives the attack that spreads the curse. When two werewolves do meet, they tend to battle over territory rather than work together.

The lycanthropic disease has apparently mutated a number of times in the past, almost on a geographical basis, with victims assuming various forms. Reports of werebears, weretigers, wererats, and such appear all over the world. Some of these can be attributed to shamanic shapechangers, but a fair number of them are victims of lycanthropy.

**Adventure Hook:** The heroes investigate a series of cattle deaths in Montana and learn from interviews that the culprit appears to be a large, two-legged wolf. In conjunction with the timing of the attacks—during full moons—it becomes obvious that the cattle-killer is a lycanthrope.

The trail of the werewolf leads to a fortified survivalist compound, where the heroes are met with liberal doses of skepticism and hostility by a host of hardcore paramilitaries. Appealing to the authorities likewise goes nowhere: they don’t believe stories of “wolfmen,” and they aren’t about to tangle with the survivalists over such nonsense.

The stakes are raised when a local rancher is slaughtered while trying to defend his herd. After a tense week of negotiation with the survivalists, one of them confesses to being the killer and surrenders. Things seemingly return to normal; at the next full moon, there are no more killings. It appears the danger is past—except that ever since the killer’s arrest, the survivalist compound has been eerily silent.

What happened to the survivalists? Does the confessed killer know what’s really been going on? And is the danger really over—or is there a werewolf at large in Montana?

## The Curse of Lycanthropy

Lycanthropy is a magical disease. Its prominence rises and falls with the tide of dark matter, and in periods of low activity, lycanthropes are virtually unheard of. Those with the “curse” may live their entire lives without so much as a bad dream during the full moon.

But because the taint is in their blood, it carries to their children, and their children’s children, until one day the dark tide rises again and the curse returns. The new werewolf then bites someone else, and the disease spreads.

When a character has been bitten by a lycanthrope and suffers at least 1 point of primary damage, the Gamemaster immediately makes a Constitution feat check for that character at a +3 step penalty. (The Gamemaster may reduce this penalty if the influence of dark matter in his or her campaign is weaker than in the base setting.)

| Check Result     | Effect         |
|------------------|----------------|
| Critical failure | Terminally ill |
| Failure          | Extremely ill  |
| Ordinary         | Ill            |
| Good             | Borderline     |
| Amazing          | No effect      |



If the victim only suffered wound damage, the disease incubates for 2d4 days; this is reduced to 1d4 days if mortal damage was inflicted. The disease sets in at the end of that time, although the only symptoms at first are a feeling of agitation and a sensation of general fitness—despite any lingering wounds. Most diagnoses mistake these symptoms for signs of recovery, but a successful Lore—*occult lore* skill check reveals that the victim has in fact contracted lycanthropy. Left untreated, he or she begins to manifest more radical symptoms as the next full moon approaches.

Just how strong a hold the disease has on the character depends on the initial Constitution feat check. How bad it gets depends on subsequent ones. (For complete information about handling disease, see the “Hazards” section in Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action in the *Gamemaster Guide*.) The Gamemaster should make all these checks for players. After all, the character knows only that he or she is feeling better—at least, until the moon is full.

*Borderline* characters require a Constitution feat check at the beginning of the next full moon. On a Critical Failure, the character’s condition worsens to extremely ill; on a Failure, the character worsens to ill. An Ordinary or Good result has no effect, but on an Amazing result the disease goes into dormancy. (It does not manifest again unless the level of dark matter rises drastically.)

*Ill* characters display extreme irritability and fits of ravenous hunger during periods of the full moon and suffer a +2 step penalty to all noncombat actions until the moon has begun to wane. At the beginning of each night with a full moon, the Gamemaster should make another Constitution feat check for the character. On a Critical Failure, the character’s condition worsens to terminally ill; on a Failure, to extremely ill. On an Ordinary or Good result, the character’s condition remains the same, and on an Amazing result, the character improves to borderline lycanthropy.

*Extremely ill* characters are constantly short-tempered and violent, suffering a +1 step penalty to all noncombat actions taken while in human form. Such a character is frequently hungry, and only meat will assuage the hunger. On nights of the full moon, the character undergoes transformation into a werewolf. At the end of the full moon cycle, the Gamemaster makes a Constitution feat check on the character’s behalf. On a Critical Failure or Failure, the character worsens to terminally ill. On an Ordinary or Good result, the character’s condition remains the same. An Amazing success means the character actually improves to ill.

*Terminally ill* characters with lycanthropy are almost completely dominated by their wolf nature. Gnawing rage and hunger are always just under the surface. The character receives a +2 step penalty on all noncombat actions taken while in human form, and any injury—or even significant frustration—causes the character to fly into a berserk rage. The sufferer attacks people or objects with his or her teeth and bare hands until the impediment is neutralized. And of

course, on nights of the full moon, the character transforms into a werewolf.

At the end of each full moon cycle, the terminally ill character is allowed a Constitution feat check to bring the beast under control—but *only if he or she so desires*. (Some choose to give in to the beast.) On a Good or Amazing result, the character improves to extremely ill; all other results have no effect on the illness.

Lycanthropy cannot be treated by ordinary medicine, but characters with Medical Science—*xenomedicine (lycanthropy)* can attempt to assist the lycanthrope’s Constitution feat check. On a Good or Amazing skill check result, the skilled character provides a –1 or –2 step bonus, respectively, to the lycanthrope’s checks to resist the disease.

## Werewolf (Shapechanger)

“The less common type of werewolf is the ‘shapechanger’—a human being who, through magical preparation of a wolfskin, has gained the power to transform into an animal. While not as dangerous as the classic variety, this type is more reprehensible, in that it actually *wants* to be a wolf rather than a human.”

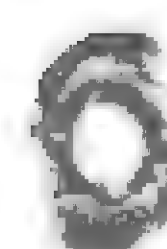
—Hoffmann Institute  
*Special Operations Manual*

Shapechangers are frequently the lowest sort of magical dabblers, those for whom the gratification of carnal urges and simple, brutal revenge are enough. Having learned the secret of magical transformation into animal shape, they spend the rest of their lives exploring the implications of their discovery. Few do so for altruistic reasons. Even fewer do so for spiritual reasons—though shapechanger cults are not unheard of.

**Description:** In human form a shapechanger is generally unremarkable, except perhaps for a casual disdain for the conventions of human society. This often creates an air of a self-assured and magnetic personality, but the truly observant might notice something feral in the subject’s expressions or body language.

In werewolf form, the shapechanger is much larger than a normal wolf. Its color is nearly always a dark gray, with the occasional black or pale gray, and the even more rare white or red. It weighs between 50 and 100 kilograms and stands about 1 meter tall at the shoulder. Its shaggy and vicious appearance belies its intelligence, clearly visible in the eyes. In other words, one can see the wolf in the man, and the man in the wolf. If killed, the shapechanger reverts back to its true, human form.





**Encounter:** If the heroes are lucky, they encounter only a single werewolf. Its tactics are similar to those of a lone gray wolf. It avoids all but the weakest targets, using its stealth and speed to stay out of sight and reach until it is ready to attack. When the creature makes its move, it attempts to bring the victim down (using an overpower attack, followed by a takedown maneuver), then subdues the prey with its powerful bite.

Unlike an ordinary wolf, however, a werewolf that attacks a human generally does not retreat if the initial attack proves unsuccessful, or if it suffers wound damage. It usually continues the fight until it begins suffering mortal

damage or is in danger of being struck unconscious. (The beast does not wish to be exposed as a human in wolf's clothing.)

When a group of werewolves attacks, the situation is considerably worse for the humans. The creatures follow pack tactics, focusing their attention on the weakest human and dodging any stronger opponents. The leader of the werewolf pack may occasionally "run interference" against particularly tough human foes, out of a muddled lupine need to establish dominance over them. The pack retreats only if more than half their number have lost more than half their wound points.

Unlike those of lycanthropes, wounds inflicted by shapechangers are not particularly infectious. Their victims (if they survive) are not doomed to become werewolves themselves.

**Habitat/Society:** Because so many skinchanging occultists are obsessed with human grudges and lusts, they tend to operate in or near centers of population—thus attracting immediate attention, pursuit, and destruction. When city dwellers sight wolves and fatal animal attacks increase in frequency, the authorities are swift to

## Shapechanger Game Data

|                                  |         |                          |                     |
|----------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| STR 14                           | (d6+11) | INT 4                    | (Animal 10 or d6+7) |
| DEX 13                           | (d4+11) | WIL 14                   | (d6+11)             |
| CON 12                           | (d4+10) | PER 4                    | (Animal 12 or d6+9) |
| Durability: 12/12/6/6            |         | Action check: 16+/15/7/3 |                     |
| Move: sprint 50, run 34, walk 12 |         | #Actions: 3              |                     |
| Reaction score: Ordinary/2       |         |                          |                     |

### Attacks

|       |        |                   |      |
|-------|--------|-------------------|------|
| Bite  | 17/8/4 | d6+1s/d4+1w/d4+3w | LI/O |
| Claws | 16/8/4 | d4+1s/d4+2s/d4+3s | LI/O |

### Defenses

+3 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +3 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 Armor (Ordinary): d4+1 (LI), d4 (HI), d4-1 (En)

### Skills

Athletics [14]—*jump* [16]; Unarmed Attack [14]; Acrobatics [13]—*dodge* [15]; Stealth [13]—*shadow* [16]; Movement [12]—*race* [14]; Stamina [12]—*endurance* [16]; Survival [12]; Knowledge [6]; Awareness [14]—*intuition* [17], *perception* [14]; Investigate [14]—*track* [18]; Resolve [14]—*physical* [16].



commence the hunt and the shapechanger usually meets a sudden end.

From time to time, shapechangers either share their magical secret with others or encounter someone who has made the same discovery. This results in the formation of a werewolf pack. They hunt together, using their human understanding to locate likely sources of food, and their animal proclivities to isolate, surround, and slaughter the prey. Werewolf packs are extremely efficient killers.

Oddly enough, packs of shapechangers tend to survive longer than individuals, despite their higher visibility. (It's difficult to cover up a pack of wolves living in a metropolitan area.) Individual motives for becoming animals are usually more diverse, and so the desire to kill specific humans is less immediate. Consequently, the group hunts animal prey; while pets are missed, their disappearance does not warrant a full search-and-destroy operation by police or animal-control authorities.

On the other hand, a great many packs form simply because the members seek a more effective outlet for their violent human urges. In such cases, the pack acts openly, often flaunting their depredations and ability to elude capture or death. Such werewolves are the worst possible kind.

**Adventure Hook:** A rash of wolf sightings in Philadelphia strongly suggests that someone has learned the magical trick of skinchanging. When bodies begin showing up, the heroes are asked to step in. They have a tough time establishing a pattern or connection, though, until they hear a police report that officers are chasing a wolf in Fairmount Park. Hurrying to the scene, they discover a confused and frightened woman running naked through the park. She claims the police are chasing her.

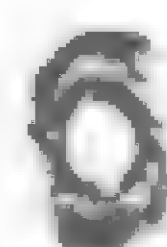
An interview reveals that the woman has been suffering blackouts that correspond to the nights when the wolf was sighted. She had been given a fur coat as a gift just prior to the first episode, though she cannot remember where it is. But while the heroes try to trace the origin of the coat, more wolves are sighted—even though the woman is safely in their custody.

Is the coat enchanted to make the wearer an unwitting shapechanger? Are there more such coats? Who is making them? And who is doing all the killing?



# Lakes and Oceans

41



LAKES AND OCEANS

If there is any place on Earth where new xenofoms might still be discovered a thousand years from now, it is in the lakes and oceans. Some, such as the kraken, or giant squid, have been known of for centuries. Others, such as the Zuiyo Maru Monster, have only recently been discovered. And with human technology still not very adept at exploring the depths, who can say what alien species lurk under the waves, where our radar and fighter jets won't find them?

## Kraken

Ann—

*Am faxing you photo of damage to Norsk trawler. Their last transmission was that they had caught a sea monster. Just look at the photo! That ruler is accurate: that's a 24-centimeter sucker mark! And it came off the wreckage of the ship's hull. If this thing shows up again, we could finally prove monster squid really exist! I'm going to hook up with a Greenpeace boat that's been monitoring the whaling in that area. I'll let you know if I get any good pictures!*

—Gythia

Some of the oldest legends of the sea tell of giant squid so large that they could sink ships, yet most people took them to be sailors' "fish stories." But over the centuries, science has slowly proved the existence of the kraken, every bit as large as the legends say—and sometimes larger.

**Description:** The kraken is a gigantic squid, with eight tentacles (or arms) 20 meters long apiece and two additional tentacles each exceeding 30 meters in length. Its cigar-shaped body is 20 meters long and 3 meters in diameter, ending in a sort of fin, with two large, humanlike eyes near the tentacles. In the center of the tentacle cluster is a mouth that looks and works much like a parrot's beak.

The color of the kraken is nominally white, though like most squid, it has the ability to change its skin color at will. These changes are often so rapid and contrasting that the creature appears to flash like a light.

**Encounter:** The kraken's color-changing ability makes it a particularly effective hunter. It moves slowly through the water looking for a suitable vantage point, where it adopts the color of its surroundings. Its camouflage is so effective that it can assume multiple colors and patterns simultaneously; Awareness skill checks to spot it suffer a +2 step penalty.



A kraken usually attacks only because it is hungry. It draws its two longest tentacles in close, and then "fires" them like harpoons when prey comes within range. The sucker-tipped tentacles grasp the prey (treat as an overpower attack), pulling it into the shorter arms, about half of



which improve the hold while the rest bring the victim close enough to bite. Damage from the tentacles is due less to constriction than to the needlelike “teeth” on their suckers. Even those pale in comparison to the awesome power of the kraken’s beak, which can chew through the hulls of most boats—and many smaller ships—in the space of a minute.

When a kraken feels outclassed (which isn’t very often) it flees, leaving behind a jet of a dark, inky substance that roughly resembles the creature’s shape. While its opponent attacks this inky phantom, the kraken escapes at top speed. The deception is so complete that opponents attempting to locate the actual squid suffer a +2 step penalty to Awareness skill checks.

**Habitat/Society:** Krakens live in the deepest reaches of the ocean, almost always in the coldest areas of the planet. Here they live, mate, tend their young, and hunt their prey, rarely venturing anywhere near the surface. When circumstances force them from the depths, they are often confused and angry, “flashing” bright colors to warn potential predators away. The display is as beautiful as it is eerie.

**Adventure Hook:** A Norwegian whaling ship radios that it has caught a “sea monster,” which it is bringing in to port. But when the ship fails to arrive, search parties are sent out. They discover only wreckage, with sucker marks almost 25 centimeters across covering its various surfaces. The sea monster apparently wasn’t as dead as the Norwegians thought.

## Kraken Game Data

STR 18 (2d4+13) INT 2 (Animal 6 or d4+4)  
DEX 12 (d4+10) WIL 8 (2d4+3)  
CON 16 (2d4+11) PER 1 (Animal 5 or d4+3)  
Durability: 16/16/8/8 Action check: 15+/14/7/3  
Move: swim 60 #Actions: 3  
Reaction score: Good/3

### Attacks

|                |         |                 |      |
|----------------|---------|-----------------|------|
| Tentacles (×2) | 22/11/5 | d6s/d6+2s/d6w   | LI/O |
| Arms (×8)      | 18/9/4  | d6s/d4w/d4+1w   | LI/O |
| Beak           | 18/9/4  | d6w/d6+2w/d6+2m | LI/G |

### Defenses

+5 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
+2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
Armor (Ordinary): d4–2 (LI), d4–1 (HI), d4–1 (En)

### Skills

Athletics [18]–*climb* [20]; Unarmed [18]; Stealth [12]–*sneak* [14]; Movement [16]–*swim* [20]; Stamina [16]–*endurance* [18]; Awareness [8]–*perception* [10]; Investigate [8]–*search* [12].

Shortly thereafter, a Greenpeace monitoring vessel in the area reports that it is under attack by a giant squid. This time, when others arrive there is nothing left but shards of wood and a smashed life preserver. Greenpeace accuses the Norwegian whaling industry of attacking one of their ships, while the whalers claim that Greenpeace is framing them with a false radio report and manufactured wreckage.

Greenpeace asks the heroes’ organization to help, and the heroes are assigned to look into the situation. They quickly find evidence of some sort of enormous cephalopod in the area: dead whales turning up on beaches, massive tentacles feeling about the decks of seagoing vessels, and the like. Greenpeace is satisfied and retracts its accusation, but the whalers chase after the beast for vengeance against their lost comrades. Unfortunately, they succeed only in wounding it.

Now the heroes are in the middle of a three-way war between the whalers, Greenpeace, and an enraged kraken. To make things worse, the giant squid is also attacking yachts, liners, and other commercial and pleasure craft. Can the creature be killed or somehow lured back into the depths, before its rampage claims more innocent lives?

## Megalodon

‘We’re going to need a hell of a lot bigger boat, Roy!’

**Description:** Though reports vary, the giant shark *megalodon carcharias* measures between 15 and 25 meters long, weighing anywhere from 10 to 60 tons. It is primarily a ghostly white color like the great white shark, but according to eyewitnesses its jaws are large enough to swallow a great white whole. A single megalodon tooth measures up to 30 centimeters long—about the span of a full-grown man’s hand.

**Encounter:** For the time being, *megalodon carcharias* is only interested in foods with which it is already familiar—marine life. Unless the heroes are near large concentrations of sea creatures, they’re not likely to catch a glimpse of the gargantuan shark. And unless they’re forced to remain in one place, they aren’t likely to get a good look.

On the other hand, if the heroes are in the water, working in or investigating a place where the marine life is plentiful, megalodon might pay a visit. Their first hint that the beast is in the area will be the sudden departure of every creature able to do so, followed by a massive shadow passing nearby.

The shark uses sensory organs near its gills to detect the motion of creatures in the water—especially frantic splashing, which indicates a fish in distress and thus less able to escape an attack. It can detect these vibrations in the water from several kilometers away. The bigger the splash, the better the meal.

Habitually, megalodon makes a pass or two before it decides to come closer than about 200 meters to a promising item.



After determining the precise source of the vibrations, the shark makes an experimental feint at the target to see if it reacts with anything harmful (such as spines, venom, or electricity). Once it's decided the target is more meal than threat, the shark moves in and attempts to bite. Once that happens, it's all over for whatever was attacked. Only those in particularly sturdy watercraft can expect to survive more than the first bite.

**Habitat/Society:** *Megalodon carcharias* appears almost exclusively in the Pacific Ocean, especially around Australia and New Guinea. Already a hotspot for great white sharks, this area is particularly fertile hunting ground for "Meg," which can make a decent meal of a few great whites.

Under most circumstances, the megalodon hunts smaller, more plentiful prey. But it's not above attacking a wounded whale, should the opportunity arise. Human beings, too, occasionally provide a snack for the voracious appetite of the giant shark, though it would take several dozen to provide a single meal. Fortunately, despite thousands of years sharing the oceans with humanity, the megalodon has not yet learned to connect the shape of boats with the concept of food.

Only the oldest and most wily of megalodons survive to the largest size. Most are of the smaller variety, "only" 15 meters long or so. This has a little to do with limited food supplies and a lot to do with oceanic pollution, which reduces populations of the shark's primary prey animals, thus limiting the seas' "carrying capacity" for lifeforms as large as the megalodon. In fact, pollution may eventually kill off the megalodon—but not before a large number of other species succumb, and the giant shark itself begins exploring alternative food sources.

**Adventure Hook:** A fishing vessel off the coast of Hawaii sends out a distress call, claiming that it has been rammed by a great white shark and is taking on water. By the time help arrives, there's nothing left but bits of wreckage. The rescue vessel reports its find and its intention to search for survivors. A few hours later, it too vanishes. A Coast Guard ship, searching for signs of either vessel, briefly radios in an unusually large sonar contact, followed moments later by a panicked SOS.

Understandably concerned, the Coast Guard and the U.S. Navy begin dispatching larger ships to the area. After recording a sonar contact "the size of a PT boat," they blanket the area in depth charges. There is no further contact, and the danger appears to be past—until fishing boats and pleasure yachts begin disappearing much closer to the island of Oahu. Hawaii's tourism is suffering, more people are dying, and ships sent to deal with the problem encounter the giant shark only where releasing depth charges would do more harm than good.



## Megalodon Game Data

|                            |          |                        |                     |
|----------------------------|----------|------------------------|---------------------|
| STR 22                     | (2d4+17) | INT 3                  | (Animal 10 or d6+7) |
| DEX 4                      | (d4+2)   | WIL 14                 | (2d4+9)             |
| CON 22                     | (2d4+17) | PER 2                  | (Animal 9 or d6+6)  |
| Durability: 22/22/11/11    |          | Action check: 8+/7/3/1 |                     |
| Move: swim 80              |          | #Actions: 4            |                     |
| Reaction score: Marginal/1 |          |                        |                     |

### Attacks

|      |         |                   |      |
|------|---------|-------------------|------|
| Bite | 22/11/5 | d6+3w/d8+5w/d4+3m | LI/G |
|------|---------|-------------------|------|

### Defenses

+5 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 no resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 Armor (Ordinary): d4 (LI), d4-1 (HI), d4+1 (En)

### Skills

Unarmed [22]; Movement [22]; Stamina [22]—*resist pain* [24];  
 Awareness [14]—*intuition* [18]; Resolve [14]—*physical* [20].



The heroes' organization assigns them to assist marine biologists in determining the nature of this mysterious sonar blip. Is this a natural creature, some sort of unknown aquatic vessel, or a prehistoric creature displaced in time? If this last, how long it can be expected to survive?

## Sea Serpent

**Description:** The sea serpent is a colossal aquatic reptilian that measures anywhere from 15 to 20 meters long, weighing between 8 and 30 tons. Its upper surface is a glossy black, while its underside is usually grayish-white. The creature possesses only two small ventral fins, located near the front of its body. Its mouth sports forty-four triangular teeth, vaguely like those of a shark.

Each crew member must make a successful Vehicle Operation—water vehicle skill check to avoid falling, with a step penalty of +1 or +3 if the tail slap scored a Good or Amazing success, respectively. Those who fail the check land in the water, and any who scored a Critical Failure also suffers d6 stun damage.

Once the sea serpent is convinced that the humans no longer present a threat, it departs if possible. Otherwise, it continues to attack the boat with its tail or tries to bite those in the water.

**Habitat/Society:** The ancestor of the sea serpent was a land-dwelling creature that gradually migrated back into the sea during the Eocene Epoch, about 50 million years ago. In time,

### CAPTAIN'S LOG — FINAL ENTRIES

*3:20 - Leak in aft hull. Skip says engines are swamped. Pumps operating at full capacity. Nothing to do but sit and wait until the compartment is dry. Crew telling passengers sea serpent stories.*

*4:31 - Crew sighted sea monster again. Passengers want to get closer look. First mate suggests taking launch while Skip effects repairs on engines. I am agreeing to this expedition, but regardless of what they say, I am taking my .503. No sense tempting fate, if that thing isn't friendly.*

**Encounter:** It is unusual, to say the least, for humans to encounter sea serpents, let alone have to fight them. Most sea serpents, on encountering humans, keep their distance. Those that are attacked generally flee. But if a sea serpent mistakes a swimmer for a meal (such as a squid) or zealous whalers force the issue—say, by harpooning the beast—it attacks.

Sea serpents do not understand the difference between vehicles and passengers, and so they almost always begin their attack on a boat with a tail slap. Large vessels can withstand the blow, but the occupants of a sufficiently small boat—a twelve-person launch or smaller—may be knocked overboard.

this evolved into the *basilosaurus*, or *zeuglodon*—the forerunner of the modern sea serpent.

The beast has been sighted, photographed, picked up on sonar, and faked for numerous hoaxes, but no living specimen has ever been captured. The occasional dead "sea monster" that washes up on beaches or turns up in fishing nets is either too decomposed to be properly identified, or at best, poorly documented before being destroyed.

What modern science doesn't know about sea serpents could fill an ocean, but some facts are inferred from examination of *basilosaurus* fossil remains. The creatures dine primarily on squid and small fish but periodically make mistakes about swimmers and small craft. Though they have been known to attack humans in the water, they rarely do so





more than once on the same target—thick human bones are too crunchy.

Most encounters with sea serpents occur when the beast is surfacing, simply because that is when sea serpents and humans are at the same depth. Presumably there are many more of the creatures in deeper water, and occasional sonar contacts with large submerged objects seem to confirm this guess.

**Adventure Hook:** The heroes have taken passage aboard a fishing trawler to slip past some particularly troublesome authorities. Halfway through their journey, they sight a shape in the ocean, which the crew guesses to be a sea serpent rumored to frequent the area. Shortly thereafter, a minor problem with the ship's engine stops the vessel; while repairs commence, the captain takes a launch out for a closer look at the sea serpent.

The expedition ends disastrously when the captain foolishly wounds the creature, which attacks the launch. The captain and a number of the crew are killed, and the survivors have to swim back to the ship. For several hours afterward, the sea serpent prowls about, occasionally making attacks at people on deck or battering at the hull. Eventually, the vessel begins to take on water.

Can the heroes repair the ship and muster enough expertise to bring it to port? Should they try to kill the sea serpent—

before it kills them? Or should they try to drive it back to the depths?

## Sea Serpent Game Data

|                 |            |               |                      |
|-----------------|------------|---------------|----------------------|
| STR 20          | (2d4+15)   | INT 4         | (Animal 12 or d4+10) |
| DEX 8           | (2d4+3)    | WIL 14        | (2d4+9)              |
| CON 18          | (2d4+13)   | PER 4         | (Animal 12 or d4+10) |
| Durability:     | 18/18/9/9  | Action check: | 12+/11/5/2           |
| Move:           | swim 44    | #Actions:     | 4                    |
| Reaction score: | Ordinary/2 |               |                      |

### Attacks

|           |         |                   |      |
|-----------|---------|-------------------|------|
| Bite      | 20/10/5 | d4+2w/d6+3w/d4+1m | LI/O |
| Tail slap | 20/10/5 | d6s/d8+1s/d8+3s   | LI/O |

### Defenses

+5 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 Armor (Ordinary): d6 (LI), d4 (HI), d8 (En)

### Skills

Unarmed [20]; Movement [18]; Stamina [18]; Awareness [14]—*intuition* [16], *perception* [16]; Resolve [14]—*physical* [16].



# Extradimensionals

The term extradimensional refers to anything that arrives on Earth from a different reality. The most obvious examples are demons, but other examples include ghosts and certain of their relatives, who somehow transcend the threshold of death to remain among the living. And then there are beings whose reality only occasionally intersects with our own, and who are content to share the Earth—so long as we humans remain good tenants in their absence.

## Black Dog

The genus *Canis* is roughly a million years old. Some time during the Mesolithic period, some twelve thousand years ago, human beings domesticated an animal resembling modern wolves. It's no surprise that almost every human culture has legends, myths, and folklore associated with dogs. Legendary blues singer Robert Johnson claimed to have gained his talent by making a deal with the devil, and he sang about having "hell hounds" on his trail.

Current evidence suggests that black dogs are extradimensional animals that somehow have the ability to cross between their home dimension and our own at will. They clearly possess a rudimentary form of ESP-*precognition* that allows them



### Black Dog Game Data

STR 12 (d4+10) INT 4 (Animal 13 or d4+11)  
DEX 10 (d4+8) WIL 14 (d4+12)  
CON 10 (d4+8) PER 3 (Animal 11 or d4+9)  
Durability: 10/10/5/5 Action Check: 15+/14/7/3  
Move: sprint 70, run 40, walk 10 #Actions: 3  
Reaction Score: Good/2

#### Attacks

Bite 15/7/3 d6+1s/d6w/d6+3w LI/O

#### Defenses

+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
+2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
Armor: d4 (LI), d4-2 (HI), d4-1 (En)

#### Skills

Stealth [10]-sneak [12], shadow [12]; Movement [10]-race [14]; Stamina [10]-endurance [14]; Awareness [14]-intuition [18], perception [16]; Investigate [14]-track [20]; Resolve [14]-physical resolve [15].

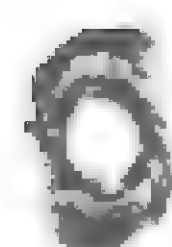
to sense when something important is about to happen to an individual. There are documented cases of black dogs taking up roles as guardians of particular families (for a generation or two) or places (in one case, for over four decades).

Their behavior is normally very passive. Unless they're attacked, they seem content to observe specific individuals. All who encounter them report being terrified of the black dogs far out of proportion to the dog's actions, size, or appearance. This form of Telepathy-*suggest* affects everyone who can see the animal, and if successful it instantly plants an unreasoning fear of the dog in the observer.

**Description:** Black dogs are generally very large, most often resembling Rottweilers. They have docked tails, erect ears, and glowing red eyes. They're usually black, but some may be black and tan, with short coats.

**Encounter:** The witness should take the appearance of a black dog as a sign of something momentous. The event may be good or bad. How the dogs know that something is about to happen to a specific person is unknown. Folklore to the contrary, there is no evidence suggesting that these "dogs"





are servants of either Bering demons or luciferans. Except in their adopted role of guardians, black dogs normally only appear to individuals.

**Habitat/Society:** Black dogs are normally solitary creatures. They may appear anywhere humans live, but seem to prefer crossroads, either real or symbolic. Rarely, a dog may adopt a family or place, appearing repeatedly like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Hound of the Baskervilles*.

**Adventure Hook:** Heroes investigate reports of a black dog with glowing red eyes repeatedly appearing and interfering with the construction of a new subdivision outside their home city. On-site investigation reveals an unusual occurrence of accidents, including several that required hospitalization. Clearly something, or someone, doesn't want the subdivision built. There is no particular history of such accidents before construction began.

Eventually, players should uncover a piece of local folklore about the ghost of a little girl known to wander the woods in the company of a very real dog, similar to the one seen at the construction site. Though the construction workers haven't reported seeing a ghost, they aren't on the site after dark when the ghost most often appeared in the woods. The little girl disappeared a hundred years ago (Gamemasters may want to shift that date based on the age of their community) while gathering berries and wild mushrooms.

Players may decide to search for the girl's remains in the hopes that a proper burial will encourage the ghost, and the dog, to move on. Whether they do or not, the narrator should describe the publicity surrounding the sightings and introduce an independent "paranormal investigation team" there to document the dog's activities. This team does spend the night on the construction site, and the first night they do, one of them is attacked and disappears in the woods.

The next day, searchers find the bloody remains of the researcher. Either the players or the independent team can find the girl's remains, but proper burial doesn't stop sightings of the ghost or the dog. Meanwhile, the nightly attacks continue. The attacker is an ekimmu. Not until it is destroyed can the ghost of its youngest victim, and the ghost's guard dog, rest.

## Blood Devil

The blood devil appears for a few days, maybe a few weeks, in the decaying heart of a major city like London or New York. It goes on a senseless murder-spree of shocking ferocity, killing anyone unfortunate enough to cross its path. And then it vanishes for years at a time.

Some of those who've tracked the devil's confirmable moments speculate that's there is only one blood devil, anywhere. No one has ever seen two of them, and when they compare

records of blood devil attacks, they can't prove that one murderous demon couldn't be responsible for each attack.

**Description:** Imagine Satan out for a thrill-kill, and that comes pretty close to the mark. The blood devil is a man-sized, demonic figure with red (or blue, accounts vary) scaly skin and sinister but genteel human features—a tapering chin, aquiline nose, high cheekbones, and black close-cropped hair in a distinct widow's peak. Two small, sharp horns jut from its forehead, and its eyes flame with hellish delight.

The blood devil prefers to dress in clothes more or less appropriate to the place it haunts. Most recently, it seems to prefer black leather and chains, with a dark leather trenchcoat or duster and high biker boots.

It also likes knives.

**Encounter:** The blood devil stalks through urban areas, looking for lone travelers out late at night. Dark alleyways are some of its favorite hunting grounds.

### Blood Devil Game Data

|                                  |    |         |                          |    |         |
|----------------------------------|----|---------|--------------------------|----|---------|
| STR                              | 11 | (d4+8)  | INT                      | 9  | (d6+6)  |
| DEX                              | 16 | (d4+13) | WIL                      | 11 | (2d4+6) |
| CON                              | 10 | (2d4+5) | PER                      | 9  | (2d6+2) |
| Durability: 10/10/5/5            |    |         | Action check: 17+/16/8/4 |    |         |
| Move: sprint 52, run 32, walk 12 |    |         | #Actions: 2              |    |         |
| Reaction score: Good/2           |    |         | Last resorts: 2          |    |         |

FX energy points: 11

#### Attacks

|          |        |                   |      |
|----------|--------|-------------------|------|
| Claws    | 14/7/3 | d4w/d4+1w/d4+2w   | LI/O |
| Hellfire | 15/7/3 | d6+1w/d8+1w/d4+1m | En/O |
| Knife    | 16/8/4 | d4+2w/d4+3w/d4+4w | LI/O |

#### Defenses

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +3 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 Armor: d4 (LI), d6-2 (HI), d6 (En)

#### Skills

Athletics [11]—*climb* [16], *jump* [20]; Melee [11]—*blade* [16]; Unarmed [11]—*brawl* [14]; Movement [10]—*race* [14]; Stamina [10]—*endurance* [12]; Acrobatics [16]—*dodge* [18], *fall* [18]; Stealth [16]—*hide* [20], *shadow* [18]; Awareness [11]—*intuition* [14]; Lore [11]—*occult lore* [15]; Resolve [11]; Deception [9]—*bluff* [11]; Interaction [9]—*intimidate* [10].

#### FX Skills

Diabolism—*black warding* [12], *command* [12], *hellfire* [15]; Special—*mighty leap* [18].





When it runs across a suitable target, the blood devil delights in tormenting the victim. It bounds into view to claw or slash the target, lightly at first (the blood devil pulls its punches for Ordinary success with claw or knife attacks) in order to panic the victim into flight. Then a terrifying game of cat-and-mouse begins as the devil hunts its fleeing victim, leaping out of the darkness to slash again before bounding off. The blood devil sometimes employs its hellfire attack as well to add to the victim's terror.

### Spring-Heeled Jack

The most notorious string of blood devil sightings occurred between 1838 and 1904 in London and England's industrial Midlands—Manchester, Birmingham, and other factory towns. Spring-Heeled Jack bounded through the nightmares of Victorian England for decades, attacking young women and taunting soldiers and constables by leaping out of the darkness to slap them and then run off. He was last seen in Liverpool bounding up and down the city streets, leaping from street to rooftop and back again.

No one can say for sure that Spring-Heeled Jack killed. But the infamous murders attributed to Jack the Ripper occurred in the middle of Spring-Heeled Jack's decades-long reign of terror, and neither was ever caught. Who could say whether Jack the Ripper was human or not?

Eventually the devil tires of the game and its attacks turn deadly. The victim is sliced and slashed to ribbons, one cut at a time.

When confronted by groups of people or capable solitary targets, the blood devil delights in taunting them and leading pursuers on fruitless chases. With its incredible leaping ability and astonishing speed, it toys with pursuers on foot and uses the urban landscape to elude pursuers in vehicles.

The blood devil occasionally uses simple deceptions and its *command* power to sow chaos, confusion, and dissent. Apparently the creature acts on whatever impulse moves it at the moment, and from time to time it chooses malicious jokes and taunts over outright murder.

**Habitat/Society:** The blood devil seems clearly demonic in nature, and presumably spends most of its time in some alternate dimension. Whether it comes from the same place as the

Bering demons or should be classified as one of those creatures is unclear. No known summoning spells can conjure a blood devil, and traditional demon wards and bindings do not appear to affect the creature any more than they would a human.

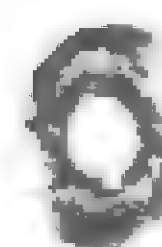
Occult researchers suggest that the blood devil uses some kind of diabolic magic to summon itself to our dimension for a few days or weeks at a time. It requires years, perhaps decades, of patient accumulation of power on "the other side" to amass enough FX energy to project itself into our world. The blood devil appears to be able to voluntarily return to its own dimension any time it chooses, but doing so bars it from returning to Earth for years.

**Adventure Hook:** A shocking series of murders in rapid succession rocks the Bay Area. The Hoffmann Institute is called in to aid in the investigation when a beat cop reports a face-to-face encounter with a diabolic figure that cut him once across the face and then bounded off into the night. It's a difficult story to swallow and the officer is accused of making it all up . . . except that the dashboard video camera in the officer's

### Mighty Leap

This FX power was described in *Beyond Science: A Guide to FX*. The cost is 1 FX point. The blood devil has 8 ranks in this skill and 9 ranks in *jump*. It can normally jump 3/4/5 meters from a standing start, 5/7/9 meters with a running start, and 2/2.5/3 meters vertically. If the blood devil expends 1 FX point, these distances are quadrupled. A leap to the top of a 2-story house is commonplace for this agile fiend.





with its claws, or with its fists if ordered by its creator to leave the opponent alive.

Drabbuk are difficult to kill because they are not truly alive. A drabbuk that loses all wound or stun points falls dormant for a time until it recovers; one reduced to 0 mortal points is reduced to a collection of twitching body parts. But for a drabbuk to truly die, its

squad car records a shadowy figure making an incredible leap, almost out of the camera's line of sight. Can the heroes catch or stop the killer before it strikes again?

brain (or whatever passes for it) must be destroyed. Those who have already destroyed the drabbuk's body can do so at their

## Drabbuk (Least Demon)

'Sir, those Liskazard containers sent to us from the Mexico City office are starting to vibrate again. The moaning noises are making it difficult for my staff to concentrate. Can we just destroy the contents, or would that constitute an occult meltdown incident?'

**Description:** Drabbuk are a type of disposable demon, created by more powerful demons to serve as guards, bearers, soldiers, and errand-runners. Unlike true demons, they are not evil spirits but flesh animated by the evil of their creator.

A drabbuk appears to be the desiccated corpse of a human—except that its eyes glow a lurid red or ghastly green. Its fingernails are often unnaturally long and sharp, its teeth filed to wicked points.

**Encounter:** A drabbuk attacks with whatever is at hand. Its favorite weapons are blades, though, and a drabbuk with the luxury of choosing a weapon gravitates toward knives, daggers, machetes, and the occasional sword. Failing that, it attacks

## Drabbuk Game Data

|                                 |        |                          |        |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------|
| STR 9                           | (d6+6) | INT 7                    | (d6+4) |
| DEX 9                           | (d6+6) | WIL 9                    | (d6+6) |
| CON 9                           | (d6+6) | PER 5                    | (d6+2) |
| Durability: 9/9/5/5             |        | Action check: 11+/10/5/2 |        |
| Move: sprint 18, run 12, walk 4 |        | #Actions: 2              |        |
| Reaction score: Marginal/1      |        | Last resorts: 0          |        |

### Attacks

|         |        |                   |      |
|---------|--------|-------------------|------|
| Unarmed | 11/5/2 | d4+1s/d4+2s/d4+3s | LI/O |
| Dagger  | 10/5/2 | d4w/d4+1w/d4+2w   | LI/O |
| Claws   | 11/5/2 | d4+1s/d4w/d4+1w   | LI/O |
| Bite    | 11/5/2 | d4+2s/d4w/d4+2w   | LI/O |

### Defenses

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 Armor (Ordinary)\*: d4-1 (LI), d4 (HI), d4 (En)

\* Armor not applicable vs. called shots to head.

### Skills

Athletics [9]—climb [10], jump [10]; Melee [9]—blade [10]; Unarmed [9]—brawl [11]; Stamina [9]—endurance [11], resist pain [10]; Awareness [9]—intuition [10].



leisure, but for those in a hurry, a called shot to the head is the best way.

A drabbuk receives no armor bonus against a successful head shot, and if any wound or mortal damage is inflicted, it explodes for d6s damage to anyone within 2 meters of its body. A previously dismembered drabbuk destroyed in this fashion merely sputters and dissolves, inflicting no damage.

**Habitat/Society:** Drabbuk are created by demons with more important things to do. They are instruments of destruction, messengers of doom, agents of evil—whatever their creator needs them to be. They serve until destroyed, either by their demon master or by opposing forces.

Only demons with the ability to use Diabolism magic can create drabbuk. The demon sacrifices 1 wound point for each drabbuk it wishes to create, then expends 2 FX energy points to cast the spell. Moments later, the drabbuk are born. It is possible for a demon to use the life energy of another creature (a human, for example), but doing so kills the “donor” and creates only a single drabbuk. Though it hurts the demon less, it is not as economical.

For detailed information on Diabolism, see Chapter 3: Arcane Magic FX Skills in *Beyond Science: A Guide to FX*. Note that this particular spell is beyond the abilities of human diabolists—even the most depraved and malevolent human cannot match the level of “concentrated evil” required to create drabbuk.

**Adventure Hook:** The heroes meet a young boy who has a natural aptitude for Monotheism miracles, and the boy’s mother asks the heroes to protect him from a demonic cult that has been trying to abduct him. Within the day she dies with a scorpion in her mouth, and the heroes have no choice but to help—or let the boy fall into the hands of the cult.

Sensing that the heroes can defend the child better than the mother, the cult’s leaders summon a demon and set it against them. It, in turn, creates a number of drabbuk to assault the heroes’ safe house. Meanwhile, the demon itself tries to corrupt the heroes, offering them power in exchange for walking away from the boy.

Can the heroes withstand a nightlong campaign of terror, with drabbuk showing up at every turn? Can they resist the wiles of the demon? And if they don’t, will the demon honor its bargain? Or does it simply drain them to create more drabbuk?

# Fader

FOUR MEN FOUND DEAD NEAR MOUNTAUK AIR FORCE  
STATION STOP BODIES BURNED STOP MAJOR DENIES  
SUPERNATURAL EVENTS STOP REQUEST  
INVESTIGATION TEAM MESSAGE ENDS

In the summer of 1943, the nations of the world were engaged in the most titanic conflagration wrought by humankind—the Second World War. In the search for a decisive advantage, scientists on both sides worked feverishly to bring newer and more deadly weapons to the battlefield. “Project Rainbow” was one such program—an attempt to employ the principles set forth in Einstein’s incomplete Unified Field Theory to render ships or planes invisible to radar. The project later became much better known to history as the Philadelphia Experiment.

Under the direction of Dr. John von Neumann and the eccentric genius Nikolai Tesla, the scientists and engineers of Project Rainbow appropriated for their experiments the USS *Eldridge* (DE-173), a newly constructed destroyer escort then fitting out at the Philadelphia Naval Yard. The *Eldridge*’s gun

## Fader Game Data

|                                 |    |         |     |                          |         |
|---------------------------------|----|---------|-----|--------------------------|---------|
| STR                             | 10 | (d6+6)  | INT | 12                       | (2d4+7) |
| DEX                             | 11 | (2d4+6) | WIL | 13                       | (d6+9)  |
| CON                             | 13 | (2d4+8) | PER | 7                        | (d8+3)  |
| Durability: 13/13/7/7           |    |         |     | Action check: 15+/16/8/4 |         |
| Move: sprint 24, run 16, walk 6 |    |         |     | #Actions: 4              |         |
| Reaction score: Good/3          |    |         |     | Last resorts: 0          |         |
| FX energy points: 8             |    |         |     |                          |         |

### Attacks

|         |        |                 |      |
|---------|--------|-----------------|------|
| Unarmed | 12/6/3 | d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s | LI/O |
| Pistol  | 14/7/3 | d4+1w/d6+1w/d6m | HI/O |
| Fuse    | 16/8/4 | see description |      |

### Defenses

- +1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
  - +2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
  - +3 resistance modifier vs. INT encounter skills
  - +3 resistance modifier vs. WIL encounter skills
- Armor: None

### Skills

Athletics [10]—climb [12], jump [12]; Unarmed [10]—brawl [12]; Stamina [13]—endurance [14]; Movement [13]—swim [14]; Modern [11]—pistol [14]; Stealth [11]—hide [12], shadow [12]; Vehicle Op [11]; Knowledge [12]—computer op [15]; Physical Science [12]—physics [18]; System Op [12]—engineering [14]; Awareness [13]—intuition [14]; Investigate [13]—interrogate [14], search [14]; Lore [13]—fringe science [19], UFO [15]; Resolve [13]—physical [14], mental [16].

### FX Skills

Dimensional Science—dimension walk [14], fade [18], fuse [16].





## Fader FX Powers

Faders have an understanding of dimensional physics and the nature of matter that simply beggars human comprehension. They can manipulate dimensional energies as an act of will, to spectacular effect.

**Dimension Walk (2 FX points):** The fader disappears slowly, transporting itself hundreds of kilometers. The fader's skill check determines how close it comes to its intended destination; on an Ordinary success, it misses by 4d20 kilometers; on a Good success, only 1d20 kilometers; and on an Amazing success, only 1d4 kilometers. The fader suffers a +1 step penalty to its skill check for every 200 kilometers between it and its intended destination (no penalty for walks of less than 200 kilometers).

The dimension walk is not instantaneous, and the fader requires 1 minute of travel time for every 100 kilometers it travels.

**Fade (1 FX point):** With this power, the fader shifts itself out of phase with the normal world. It becomes ghostly or translucent and gains the ability to walk through solid matter. The fader remains out of phase for 3 action rounds, and may increase the duration by 1 additional action round per extra FX point spent. The extent of its fade depends on its skill check:

**Ordinary:** Translucent and partially intangible. The fader can walk through walls or barriers less than 20 cm thick, and any attacks against the fader suffer a +2 step penalty. The fader's own attacks or interactions with the physical world (except for its *fuse* attack) suffer the same penalty.

**Good:** Ghostly and intangible. The fader can walk through barriers or walls up to 1 meter thick, and any attacks against it suffer a +4 step penalty. The fader's own attacks (excluding *fuse*) suffer the same penalty.

**Amazing:** Invisible and immaterial. The fader can walk through any barrier at its normal walking movement rate as long as it maintains the power. It cannot be affected by any physical attack, or interact with the world around it in any fashion.

- **Improved Fade:** At skill rank 6, the fader ignores 2 steps of penalty for attacking while in a fade state. If it normally could not attack at all, it may attack with a +4 step penalty.

**Fuse (1 FX point):** A fader can cause a person or object to become partially permeable to normal matter, and then reverse the process, leaving people and objects physically fused in walls, trees, parking lots, cars, and so on. This horrible attack inflicts  $d8w/d8+4w/d6+2m$  of damage that is not affected by the target's toughness or armor. The range of the attack is 2/4/6 meters for short/medium/long range.

Characters fused into stationary objects are immobilized. Removing the character inflicts damage equal to the damage inflicted by the fuse attack; in many cases it just can't be done without killing the victim.

turrets were removed and replaced with massive generators, and the entire ship was wrapped in magnetic coils. On October 28th, 1943, the *Eldridge* went to sea for the final operational test of the Rainbow equipment installation.

At 5:15 P.M., three electrician's mates threw the switches that powered the mammoth field coils. A green cloud of mist formed around the *Eldridge*, and the ship grew transparent. Moments later, it vanished completely in blinding blue flash. To the observers on the command and support ships stationed nearby, the small destroyer was simply gone . . . although eyewitnesses at the Norfolk Naval Base, almost 200 miles away, later claimed that the *Eldridge* appeared out of nowhere and remained for several minutes before vanishing again.

When the *Eldridge* returned, it was clear that Project Rainbow had far exceeded the expected results. By accident or design, U.S. scientists had breached the walls of time and space, catapulting the ship hundreds of miles in the blink of an eye. But the experiment was deemed a failure because the effects on the crew were extraordinary and horrible.

Most men on board—the lucky ones—simply went irrecoverably insane, and spent the rest of the war confined in a special ward of the Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland. Others were burned terribly both inside and out, in a manner reminiscent of victims of spontaneous human combustion. A few simply vanished from the ship altogether, and did not return when the *Eldridge* came back from wherever it had gone to. And, most horrible of all, some men were actually *fused* into the steel superstructure of the ship when the *Eldridge* reappeared.

The small number of crewmen who survived the experience with mind and body more or less intact didn't escape the effects altogether. These sailors displayed a peculiar tendency to simply fade out of existence weeks or months after the experiment had taken place. Two men caught in a barroom brawl in Philadelphia vanished into thin air in the sight of a dozen witnesses, never to be seen again. Another man was seen to walk through a wall and vanish, likewise never to be seen again. There are, of course, hundreds of men living today who served on board the USS *Eldridge* later in the war—but no one aboard that ship on October 28th, 1943, is alive and sane today.

The Office of Naval Research has a nice form letter called OI-511 that denies that any of this ever took place. But it doesn't explain why the *Eldridge*'s logs from July to December 1943 are missing.

**Description:** On the outside, a fader looks just like any other human; they once were human, after all, and the only real difference between a fader and a human lies in the mind and personality. The fader's human persona has been completely compromised or replaced by an alien intellect from some distant reach of space. They don't speak much, and are often perceived as sullen, expressionless, or apathetic.





Faders seem to “download” memories and learning from the people they’ve replaced, so they are familiar with details of the person’s life and society. But they are cold, ruthless, and brilliant imitations of the person they used to be. There’s one more thing about faders: they don’t age, at least not the way most people do. Every fader in existence looks exactly like its body did in 1943.

**Encounter:** A fader sticks to its cover identity unless threatened with imminent violence or confinement. That means that a fader spends most of its time looking, acting, and reacting like an extremely withdrawn or quietly hostile human being. They don’t use two words where one word will do. If confronted by a small number of enemies, the fader may strike back with all of its formidable powers, seeking to silence them forever. Against overwhelming odds or in difficult situations, the fader simply leaves using its paranormal abilities.

When a fader is not protecting its cover identity or trying to fit in to human society, it moves quickly and ruthlessly to neutralize opponents in the most efficient manner possible. A fader breaking into a power plant simply fades past the guards . . . and murders anyone who happens to stumble across it

while it’s doing its work. Again, when a fader decides that a situation is irretrievable, it uses its powers to vanish instead of risking capture or incapacitation.

Faders may make use of human weapons and tactics, but they don’t arm themselves unless it fits the cover identity or they don’t care who sees them. In a fight, a fader is much more likely to rely on its Dimensional Science FX skills in order to neutralize or escape its foes as quickly as possible.

**Habitat/Society:** Faders come to our world through doorways, portals, dimensional gates, or conditions resembling those devices. Whether they meant to or not, the scientists of Project Rainbow stumbled upon the means of creating a doorway and managed to send (at best count) one hundred and twenty human beings into a place where they don’t belong. What they got back in return were a hundred or so lunatics, ten or twelve corpses, and about a half-dozen faders—human beings possessed by alien intelligences.

Faders are driven by two primary motivations. First, they require electromagnetic fields for sustenance. While they are physiologically human, the alien intelligence that is imprinted over the human mind seems to require EM energy to stay alive. Faders even raid power stations, electrical plants, radar stations, and TV or radio towers in an emergency. However, most prefer to establish a cover identity that allows them access to EM energy on a routine basis. Therefore faders may pose as engineers, linemen, technicians, or scientists. Sometimes, faders may instead sell their technical knowledge in the private sector and use their fortunes to create private power plants or stations where they can indulge their hunger at will. An eccentric millionaire whose desert retreat includes hundreds of acres of wind-mill generators might be a fader laying low in his stronghold.

Other faders work with the government, exchanging their knowledge of technology for facilities and funds suitable for their work. Some of these individuals were involved the secret experiments at the Montauk radar station from the mid-50s until the mid-80s, dabbling in teleportation, time travel, broadcast power, and other phenomena.

No one knows how many faders there are. About six to ten of the *Eldridge*’s crew and the technicians aboard the ship on the day of the test are currently unaccounted for (the uncertainty stems from the question of exactly how many technicians were on board when the generators were started). There may be more faders, especially if rumors about the Air Force’s Project Montauk or similar Soviet experiments are true.

**Adventure Hook:** Several security guards at a corporate-sponsored high-energy physics laboratory are found dead, fused into the steel walls of the underground facility. Security videos show a ghostly figure walking through walls and then solidifying into a normal-looking man, who then sabotages the facility. The lab director calls in the Hoffmann Institute to help investigate the paranormal assault. But by the time the heroes reach the facility, the lab director is on a leave of absence and



the new director politely refuses the heroes' assistance. Who really destroyed the collider, why was the former director dismissed, and who's trying to suppress the story now?

## Isci ba Fan (Greater Demon)

Humans are not the only species on Earth with a mythology that includes demons. When the Greys first arrived on this world, they encountered a psionic entity so powerful and malign that they sacrificed an entire ship—and the thousands of Greys aboard—to defeat the thing. Sadly, they were mistaken: Isci ba Fan, the demon of silence, survived and followed the Greys back to the stars.

**Description:** Isci ba Fan is a creature of pure independent consciousness. Thousands of years ago, it attempted to pass

### Isci ba Fan Game Data

STR 10 (+0) INT 18 (+4)  
DEX 10 (+0) WIL 18 (+4)  
CON 14 PER 18

Durability: 18/18/9/9 Action check: 19+/18/9/4  
Move: run 12, walk 4 #Actions: 4  
Reaction score: Good/3 Last resorts: 2  
Psionic energy points: 30

#### Attacks

Mind blast 22/11/5 d6+2s/d8+2s/d12+2s special  
Possession\* 26/13/6 Special (see text)

#### Defenses

Intangibility: +5 resistance modifier to melee and ranged attacks (only +2 vs. energy attacks)  
Intangibility: +4 step penalty to Awareness checks to perceive the demon (+1 in strong light)

#### Skills

Stealth [10]—*hide* [14], *shadow* [14], *sneak* [14]; Stamina [14]—*endurance* [18], *resist pain* [18]; Knowledge [18]—*deduce* [22], *language (Etoile)* [20], *language (Grey)* [22], *language (kinori)* [20]; Life Science [18]—*xenology* [20]; Technical [18]—*xenoengineering* [22]; Lore [18]—*fringe science* [22], *occult* [22]; Resolve [18]—*mental* [26]; Deception [18]—*bluff* [23]; Interaction [18]—*interview* [20].

#### Psionic Skills

ESP [18]—*clairaudience* [20], *clairvoyance* [20], *mind reading* [24], *sensitivity* [24]; Telepathy [18]—*contact* [24], *illusion* [20], *mind blast* [22], *mind shield* [22], *suggest* [22].



between worlds psionically, only to accidentally detach its mind from its body. From that moment on, its entire existence has been devoted to discovering a way to return home across the stars and rejoin the land of the living. In the meantime, it exists as an all-but-invisible field of shadow, drifting among humanity unnoticed and unheeded for millennia.

**Encounter:** The demon uses its incredible psionic strength to possess living beings—particularly the weak-minded—and achieve the physicality needed to fulfill some of its schemes. It hides in areas of darkness, reshaping its form to mimic shadows, awaiting its chosen victim. Isci ba Fan's nonphysical form is difficult to notice, conferring a +4 step penalty on Awareness checks to detect it in shadows, and a +1 step penalty even when it is in strong light.

Isci ba Fan's tremendous skill at possession imposes an additional +2 step penalty on the victim's Resolve—*mental* resolve checks to regain control (see the "Possession" sidebar). The person it possesses always appears to be in shadow until Isci ba Fan departs. The demon usually covers this fact by staying in the shade as much as possible—if not in complete darkness. The possessed victim rarely speaks, preferring psionic contact when possible.



## Possession

Some creatures have the ability to possess the physical bodies of others. The target of possession may or may not have a chance to resist this mental intrusion, depending upon its origin (most victims of demonic possession are in that state involuntarily). An unwilling victim's Will resistance modifier generally applies to the attacking entity's possession attempt.

The possessing entity is able to use all of its normal skills in the body of the host; however, any skills based on physical abilities (Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution) use the host body's abilities instead of the possessor's. The victim's memories are unavailable to the possessor, as the victim's physical body (including its brain) is little more than a shell for the invading intelligence. Some advanced beings may be able to utilize the possessed creature's skills as well.

A possessed victim can sometimes expel an intruder through force of will. The host can make a Resolve—*mental resolve* skill check with a +3 step penalty once every day to shake off the possessor. In most cases, however, *exorcism* or similar miracles or spells are needed to drive out the possessing agent. The entity can leave its host and return to its own form at any time.

For more about possession, see Chapter 4: Arcana in the *DARK•MATTER Campaign Setting*.

The Greys have learned to recognize the presence of the demon in a living being by the complete lack of a mental “signature.” In game terms, attempts to use ESP—*mind reading* or Telepathy—*contact* against Isci ba Fan automatically fail (though the demon can still use these abilities itself if it chooses). Only when it is outside a physical body can the demon be contacted psionically.

**Habitat/Society:** Legends and rumors of Isci ba Fan circulated among the Greys for centuries, in tales of those with “silent minds”—as empty as the void between the stars. But the demon actually maintained a low profile. If it were discovered again, it could not survive the destruction of another city-ship (at least, not while it was still in space). In time, the Greys came to believe the demon was a mythical creature, at the same time finding reasonable, “enlightened” explanations for the evidence of its existence among them.

When the Greys returned to Earth, so did Isci ba Fan. The demon found humans much more to its liking than Greys (human minds being considerably less guarded). Now it haunts the Earth, moving from victim to victim and remembered only as a surreal waking nightmare. Unfortunately for the demon, humans are no more useful to its ultimate purpose than Greys.

Isci ba Fan has no cult as such and no particular desire for

one. In fact, it considers the possession of humans and even Greys distasteful, like wearing someone else's soiled clothing. But circumstances require it to make use of such beings, sometimes for years at a time—a necessity that Isci ba Fan deeply resents. This attitude toward its “vessels” seldom leaves them intact.

## Kwarikan (Lesser Demon)

Among the Yurimagua people of the Amazon basin, the legend of devils that delight in beating mortals is taken so seriously that many Yurimagua still ritually flog volunteers to appease the monsters. This tradition is centuries old, and the Yurimagua would be surprised to learn that these demons, the kwarikans, have since moved on to more interesting territory. Now kwarikans can be found in major cities, where vicious beatings are a nightly occurrence.

**Description:** A kwarikan is roughly humanoid, with dark gray skin and no hair. It stands 2 meters tall and possesses broad

### Kwarikan Game Data

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| STR 16 (2d4+11)                         | INT 8 (d4+6)             |
| DEX 10 (d4+8)                           | WIL 12 (d6+9)            |
| CON 16 (2d4+11)                         | PER 6 (2d4+1)            |
| Durability: 16/16/8/8                   | Action check: 13+/12/6/3 |
| Move: sprint 26, run 16, walk 6, fly 52 | #Actions: 3              |
| Reaction score: Ordinary/2              | Last resorts: 0          |
| FX energy points: 10                    |                          |

#### Attacks

|         |        |                   |      |
|---------|--------|-------------------|------|
| Unarmed | 16/8/4 | d4+2s/d4+3s/d4+1w | LI/O |
| Horns   | 16/8/4 | d6+1s/d6w/d6+1w   | LI/O |

#### Defenses

+4 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
+2 resistance modifier vs. WIL encounter skills  
Camouflage: +4 step penalty to Awareness checks to perceive the demon  
Armor (Ordinary): d4+2 (LI), d4+1 (HI), d4+1 (En)

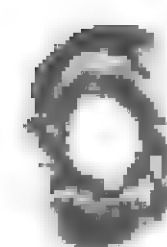
#### Skills

Athletics [16]—*climb* [18]; Unarmed [16]; Acrobatics [10]—*flight* [12]; Stamina [16]—*endurance* [20], *resist pain* [18]; Awareness [12]—*perception* [14]; Resolve [12]—*physical* [16].

#### FX Skills

Arcane Magic (Diabolism)—*command* [10].





Blunting or severing its horns is a tremendous insult to a kwarikan.

When a kwarikan is killed, it crumbles, leaving only bits of coal and coal dust behind.

#### **Habitat/Society:**

The kwarikans are lesser demons that delight in brutality and in the physical and emotional suffering it brings. Not surprisingly, they are quite popular with more powerful demons, since they make excellent torturers. In the traditional Christian view of Hell, kwarikans

shoulders from which extend wings like those of a bat, spanning 6 meters. Its limbs and torso are spindly, belying its great strength. Unlike many demons, the kwarikan has little natural weaponry, except for the long, straight horns that extend up to half a meter from its forehead.

**Encounter:** Whenever possible, a kwarikan uses its *command* spell to urge one human to brutalize another. This tactic works best with those who are already prone to violence, so the demon seeks out those individuals, encouraging them to perform even greater acts of sadism, including disfigurement and mutilation. Many kwarikans latch onto those sick and twisted mortals who are already given to such depravity and follow them everywhere, eager to see a display.

Sometimes, though, there are no malicious humans about, or those present are able to resist the kwarikan's enticement. On those occasions, the demon opts for the personal approach, using its fists as bludgeons to subdue a hapless mortal, then gouging with its fingers. A kwarikan is not above mutilation, if an appropriate instrument is handy—scissors, knives, even open flames or searing hot surfaces—but it avoids using its horns, except when faced with exceptional foes. To kwarikans, horns dulled from use are a sign that the demon was too weak to defeat its opponent.

would be the demons who torment sinners.

Kwarikans often prowl in groups of two or three, but rarely more. Their natural coloration and magical abilities make them especially difficult to spot when they are in shadow, conferring a +4 step penalty on Awareness skill checks to notice them. The demons are not particularly stealthy, though, just hard to see. Those who perceive them often mistake the kwarikans for a trick of the light—though this may just be the human mind denying what it cannot accept.

**Adventure Hook:** During a fight, one of the heroes notices a blurred, shadowy shape hovering behind an opponent. The shape seems to be making suggestions, but in a voice too low to be heard clearly. The combatant to whom the shape is whispering seems somehow out of control throughout the fight.

Later, in another confrontation, the same hero hears a voice suggesting specific, vicious tactics—things designed more to hurt than to end the fight decisively. Even when the hero's opponent is down, the voice goes on whispering, suggesting mutilation of the fallen foe. If the hero resists the suggestions, the previously observed shape, a kwarikan, appears and castigates him or her for "lack of courage."

Does the hero try to resist the kwarikan alone or enlist the aid of his or her teammates? And where there's one kwarikan, won't there be others?





## Meddler (Lesser Demon)

**Description:** The meddler feeds on feelings of guilt and will do almost anything to generate that emotion in its victims. It appears different to each person it targets, but always as someone toward whom that person feels some obligation. It may be a parent or grandparent, a child, an ex-lover, or even just a needy stranger. From the moment the meddler makes its choice until the victim dies, it effectively is the person it has chosen to emulate—though with a heart as black as midnight.

A meddler rarely appears in its true form: a winged, charred infant with drool running from its fanged mouth.

**Encounter:** Typically, a meddler selects a victim in near-constant proximity and feeds at its leisure. When confronted, this demon rarely fights back. It either flees or hides behind its chosen identity, playing the role of a helpless innocent to the hilt. It even goes so far as to suffer a vicious beating from heroes who have guessed its true form; if they relent, the meddler can feed from their guilt as well.

The demon's most effective abilities are its power to change forms and its ability to drain willpower. Anyone—not just the

victim—who accedes to the meddler's request for help (even something as simple as buying groceries or bringing a cup of tea) must attempt a *Resolve-mental resolve* skill check. On a Critical Failure, the character loses  $d4+1$  points of Will; Failure,  $d4$  points; Ordinary success, 1 point. A Good success means the character resists the attack; on an Amazing success, he or she not only resists but also realizes what is happening.

**Habitat/Society:** A meddler identifies its potential victim by how the target behaves toward the people closest to him or her. Specifically, it looks for preoccupation and neglect—and by using its *ESP-mind reading* skill, the meddler can detect feelings of remorse about that neglect.

Once a meddler has located a viable target, it finds that person's "weak spot": the one human being he or she feels most responsible for. The meddler stalks and unceremoniously kills the dependent person, then assumes his or her life, with the selected victim none the wiser.

The meddler's next step is to act needy, requiring near-constant care and attention. Typically, the pretext is a sudden debilitating illness, or perhaps a painful accident—something that forces the victim to spend nearly every moment with the disguised meddler. The demon, in response, feeds off the victim's guilt.

Astute individuals may notice telltale signs that all is not as



## Meddler Game Data

STR 8 (d4+6) INT 12 (d6+9)  
 DEX 8 (d4+6) WIL 14 (d4+12)  
 CON 12 (d6+9) PER 12 (d6+9)  
 Durability: 12/12/6/6 Action check: 13+/12/6/3  
 Move: run 10, walk 4, fly 32 #Actions: 3  
 Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 2  
 FX energy points: 10

### Attacks

|            |       |                    |      |
|------------|-------|--------------------|------|
| Bite       | 8/4/2 | d4s/d4w/d4+1w      | LI/O |
| Will drain | —     | Special (see text) |      |

### Defenses

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 no resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 +1 resistance modifier vs. INT encounter skills  
 +2 resistance modifier vs. WIL encounter skills  
 Armor (Ordinary): d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d4+1 (En)

### Skills

Unarmed [8]; Stamina [12]—*endurance* [14]; Awareness [14]—*intuition* [16]; Resolve [14]—*mental* [16]; Deception [12]—*bluff* [15]; Interaction [12]—*charm* [14], *intimidate* [14], *taunt* [15].

### Psionic Skills

ESP [12]—*mind reading* [14].

### FX Skills

Arcane Magic (Diabolism)—*command* [16].

it appears. The most obvious clue is that the meddler has no taste buds—indeed, no real sensation at all. It can eat or drink anything nonlethal without batting an eyelash.

**Adventure Hook:** During an investigation, the heroes accidentally injure an elderly woman—a meddler in disguise. Before she is taken to the hospital, she asks them to tell her daughter where she is. When they contact the daughter, she becomes frantic, begging the heroes to drive her to the hospital. (She doesn't have a car or any spare money for taxis, let alone the hospital bill.)

During their first visit, the disguised meddler goes to work on the heroes. By playing up its helplessness and inability to cover the medical bills, it tries to guilt them into offering to pay, running errands (such as ferrying the daughter back and forth), and so on. If they feel responsible enough to agree, the meddler eagerly dines on their guilt. At the end of the visit, the meddler uses its *command* magic to compel as many heroes as possible to come again—soon. It runs them through the same

*My dearest Olivia,*

*I know you gave up a lot of things to move back home and take care of me: your career, even your marriage. You don't know how much I appreciate that. I know I'm difficult to get along with, and I can make very unpleasant messes.*

*Sometimes I sense your resentment at how I've ruined your life. But I won't say "Don't hate me, because I'm your mother."*

*No, I've decided to finally tell you this. Don't hate your mother...because I'm not really your mother. In fact, I killed her a long time ago....*

emotional wringer every time, using magic to bring them back for more.

Eventually, the heroes should begin to notice the pattern of dependency in themselves, the daughter, and even the hospital staff (who also make a fine meal). With some research, they can uncover lore relating to a demon that feeds on guilt, and hopefully put two and two together.

But how do they combat the meddler without appearing to abuse a helpless old woman? Can they convince the other victims that they have a demon on their hands?

## Montauk Monster

Ever see the movie *Forbidden Planet*? It's a great old '50s science fiction film, with some of the best special effects anyone had ever done up to that time. Robbie the Robot appears. Leslie Nielson—yes, Leslie Nielson—plays a straight role as the captain of a flying saucer exploring the cosmos. The monster that murdered Earth-men in their sleep was a horrible energy-beast, invisible and intangible, with a touch that could melt steel and claws like white-hot swords. So get this: the US Air Force managed to summon something a lot like the *Forbidden Planet* monster and accidentally let it loose on Long Island on a fall day in 1966.

Here's the short version of the story. Despite the hazards identified in the Philadelphia Experiment, the government was still interested in exploring some of the possibilities offered by the technology inadvertently discovered during Project





Rainbow. So, a few years after the end of the war, a quiet portion of Montauk Air Force Radar Station was appropriated for a continuation of the experiments under more controlled conditions. The Sage radar set supposedly positioned to watch the skies over the Atlantic for Russian bombers was actually a massive land-based installation designed to duplicate the effects of the equipment installed on board the USS *Eldridge* back in 1943.

From 1959 through 1983, experiments in teleportation, dimensional transport, and time travel took place on the eastern end of Long Island, only a few miles from the quaint summer beachfront homes of the Manhattan elite. Some of these experiments breached the dimensional barrier to whatever place it is the faders come from, and on at least one occasion something different came through.

**Description:** The Montauk Monster is normally invisible. It is a cohesive energy field roughly 2 to 3 meters in extent and more or less humanoid in shape. Interactions with the physical world (including its attacks) cause the creature's form to give off brilliant flashes of light—the only time it's visible to the naked eye. It is intensely hot and gives off an audible crackling or humming sound.

## Montauk Monster Game Data

|                            |    |         |                          |    |         |
|----------------------------|----|---------|--------------------------|----|---------|
| STR                        | 14 | (2d6+7) | INT                      | 8  | (2d4+4) |
| DEX                        | 10 | (2d4+5) | WIL                      | 13 | (d6+9)  |
| CON                        | 15 | (2d6+8) | PER                      | 3  | (d4+1)  |
| Durability: 15/15/8/8      |    |         | Action check: 13+/12/6/3 |    |         |
| Move: run 20, walk 10      |    |         | #Actions: 4              |    |         |
| Reaction score: Ordinary/2 |    |         | Last resorts: 0          |    |         |
| FX energy points: 12       |    |         |                          |    |         |

### Attacks

|        |        |                   |       |
|--------|--------|-------------------|-------|
| Plasma | 15/7/3 | d6+2w/d8+2w/d6+2m | En/Gd |
| Fuse   | 16/8/4 | see description*  |       |

### Defenses

Good toughness, fading  
 +2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 no resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 +2 resistance modifier vs. WIL encounter skills  
 Armor: d4 (LI), d4-1 (HI), d8 (En)

### Skills

Unarmed [14]—*brawl* [15]; Stamina [15]—*endurance* [18]; Physical Science [8]—*physics* [12]; System Op [8]—*engineering* [12]; Awareness [13]—*intuition* [14], *perception* [15]; Lore [13]—*fringe science* [19]; Resolve [13]—*physical* [16], *mental* [16].

### FX Skills\*

Dimensional Science—*dimension walk* [14], *fade* [22], *fuse* [16].

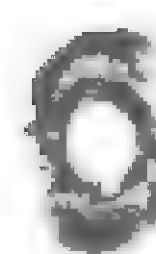
\* see the Fader entry for a description of these abilities.

**Encounter:** The monster is a rampaging force of destruction that angrily lashes out at anything, living or nonliving, that happens to fall in its path. It attacks with powerful punches and slashes of its extremities, causing horrible burns. It also shares the fader's ability to fuse people and objects together.

The monster is basically a fader in reverse. It must use its *dimension walk* ability to maintain its existence in normal space. Each *dimension walk* allows it 1, 5, or 10 minutes of activity for an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success. When the FX points are gone, the monster dissipates and cannot return until it recovers FX points and succeeds at a *dimension walk* skill check at a +4 step penalty. If the monster scores a Critical Failure on this check, or three consecutive failures, it is banished to its own dimension and cannot return unless someone else opens a dimensional doorway for it to use.

The monster is sufficiently skilled with the *fade* power to gain the *improved fade* rank benefit. It frequently attacks while partially or completely out of phase with the normal world.





**Habitat/Society:** The Montauk Monster so far appears to have been the unique product of an experiment in dimensional physics. No other reports of similar creatures exist . . . but it's possible that any high-energy physics experiment might breach the dimensional barriers and open a doorway for a similar being to step through. Fortunately, the monsters can exist in our dimension for only a few short hours before they vanish, never to return.

Some fringe theorists have suggested that the Montauk Monster and the fader are of the same species, perceived in two very different manifestations. Certainly the similarity of their special powers suggests some kind of link.

## Revenant

'No! You're dead! I killed you! You can't be here!'  
'You're right, you did. But you used too many bullets . . .  
so I'm giving some back.'

Every so often, justice seems to have a mind of its own. When someone dies for all the wrong reasons, he or she can sometimes transcend death and return to balance the scales—as a revenant.

**Description:** A revenant looks much like any ordinary human, except that he or she bears the scars of death, sometimes in obvious and startling ways. A hanged man might retain ligature marks on his neck. Someone struck by a car might walk with a pronounced limp, and someone who drowned might always be pale.

**Encounter:** Typically, heroes encounter a revenant engaged in fulfilling its worldly task—and try to interfere. Most likely this will mean a fight, but unless the heroes seem to be particularly ruthless, the revenant tries to avoid hurting them. After all, they are probably not part of its quest, and doing them serious injury has detrimental effects on its ability to fulfill its mission.

A revenant is especially effective in combat because of the abilities granted by whatever force gave it renewed life. These abilities come with a cost, however, the foremost of which is that the revenant cannot willingly take an innocent life. If it does so, the revenant loses all of its powers until it makes appropriate amends, as determined by the Gamemaster. In addition, the revenant's specific abilities make specific demands of it.

A revenant does not experience pain; it can never be dazed. To gain this ability, the revenant must remain true to its purpose; if it suffers damage in the pursuit of any other task, it can be dazed as normal.

A revenant is particularly resistant to disease, poison, and fatigue, gaining a -3 step bonus to all Constitution feat checks, and Stamina- and Resolve-based skill checks. Again,

the revenant must remain true to its purpose to reap the benefits of this ability.

A revenant can recover from its wounds with supernatural speed. Stun damage disappears at the end of each round, wound damage heals at the end of each scene, and mortal damage can be naturally recovered with a successful Resolve-*physical resolve* skill check once per day. On a Marginal success, the revenant recovers 1 mortal point; Ordinary, 2; Good, 3; and Amazing, 4. This ability functions only when the revenant is in pursuit of its quest or saving an innocent life (the revenant cannot have engineered the threat). If neither of these conditions is met, this power does not function.

All of these abilities give a revenant some unusual combat tactics. Frequently it waits for opponents to exhaust themselves or their ammunition before it counterattacks. A revenant also takes advantage of precarious positions to do battle, knowing that falling, for example, holds considerably less danger to itself than to its opponent. Most importantly, a revenant uses its own body to protect innocents who may be threatened by the conflict.

## Revenant Game Data

|                                 |         |                         |        |
|---------------------------------|---------|-------------------------|--------|
| STR 11                          | (d6+8)  | INT 8                   | (d6+5) |
| DEX 10                          | (d4+8)  | WIL 11                  | (d6+8) |
| CON 12                          | (d4+10) | PER 8                   | (d6+5) |
| Durability: 12/12/6/6           |         | Action check: 10+/9/4/2 |        |
| Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 |         | #Actions: 2             |        |
| Reaction score: Marginal/1      |         | Last resorts: 1         |        |
| FX energy points: 10            |         |                         |        |

### Attacks

Unarmed 11/5/2 d4+2s/d4+3s/d4+4s LI/O

### Defenses

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
no resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
+1 resistance modifier vs. WIL encounter skills  
-3 step bonus to resist toxins, diseases, and fatigue  
Armor: none (LI), none (HI), none (En)

### Skills

Athletics [11]; Unarmed [11]; Modern [10]-*pistol* [11]; Stealth [10]-*shadow* [11], *sneak* [12]; Stamina [12]-*endurance* [13]; Knowledge [8]; Awareness [11]-*intuition* [12]; Lore [11]; Resolve [11]-*mental* [12], *physical* [14]; Interaction [8]-*intimidate* [10].

### FX Skills

Arcane Magic (Enochian)-*halo* [12], *peaceful shroud* [12].



**Habitat/Society:** Revenants exist because dark matter and strong emotions sometimes mix in interesting ways. The precise reason for this is unknown—the process cannot generally be duplicated under “laboratory” conditions. But practitioners of Enochian magic claim that their practice is closely connected with the same mystical force that creates revenants. Since revenants are occasionally observed employing Enochian magic, this assertion may be accurate.

A revenant generally has a limited lifespan, though some last longer than others. This seems to be related to the nature of the revenant’s need to remain on Earth: those avenging a murder, for example, tend to return to the grave once the deed is done. Those who return to offer protection generally vanish when there is no one left to protect.

That “avenger” revenants seem to appear more often may only be a sign of their flamboyance in accomplishing their task. Other revenants may be every bit as common, but keep a much lower profile.

## Playing a Revenant

Some players may want to experience the DARK•MATTER setting as something other than an ordinary human. Though a revenant character’s tenure on Earth is likely to be fairly short, he or she enjoys many benefits—provided the hero’s motives remain pure.

When creating a revenant character, the player should discuss with the Gamemaster the circumstances of the revenant’s death, and what constitutes “pursuing the goal.” Usually, this will be fairly clear from the circumstances of the character’s death. The goal must be specific, quantifiable, and attainable.

For example, a teacher killed by four gang members might have as his stated goal “Teach all four the consequences of violence”: He has to convince those gangsters to voluntarily reform. He could not have the goal “Convince all gang members to reform,” since that is not reasonably attainable.

## Special Abilities

A revenant possesses the same special abilities described under “Encounter” above. The Gamemaster should take care not to let the player abuse these: The same restrictions apply as to a nonhero revenant. That is, the character can use his or her abilities only while consciously pursuing the stated goal or protecting innocents from mortal injury.

The revenant is allowed some latitude in pursuing his or her goal, but how much depends on its nature. The hero is allotted a specific amount of time to complete the task, after which he or she simply dies. The sample careers listed below give some examples.

Note that the hero need not have belonged to any given

profession in life to be a particular kind of revenant. But a player who wishes to play a dead former hero should probably stick to the old profession, Ability Scores, and skills for simplicity’s sake.

Most importantly, a revenant hero never gains achievement points and cannot buy skill ranks, rank benefits, or achievement benefits.

## Free Skills

The following broad skills are free to all revenant heroes: Athletics, Stamina, Knowledge, Awareness, Resolve, and Interaction.

## Avenger (Combat Spec)

The revenants who most freely use their powers are those who have come back to end the lives of the wicked. An avenging revenant is allotted only a month to accomplish its goal, regardless of how far its targets are from its place of return. A player should play an avenger for only a single adventure, which should revolve around the revenant’s goal.

**Signature Equipment:** Burial clothes, weapons and articles from any previously dispatched targets.

**Skill Package:** *Melee Weapons—blade*; *Unarmed Attack—power martial arts*; *Stamina—endurance*; *Modern Ranged Weapons—pistol*; *Resolve—physical resolve*; *Arcane Magic FX (Enochian)—halo*. Cost: 41 points.

**Suggested Perks:** Danger Sense, Fists of Iron, Hidden Identity.

**Suggested Flaws:** Dirt Poor, Forgetful, Powerful Enemy.

## Messenger (Diplomat (Tech Op))

The unfortunate who died over a misunderstanding or at the hands of someone who simply needed better guidance, may return as a messenger. The revenant’s goal is to clear up the confusion that led to his or her death, or to educate killers that violence is not the answer to their problems.

A messenger is allowed a year among the living. Much of the hero’s free time should be spent pursuing his or her goal, but unless the campaign is packed with activity, the player should not expect the character to last for more than a handful of adventures.

**Signature Equipment:** Books, religious icon.

**Skill Package:** *Knowledge—deduce 2, first aid*; *Medical Science—psychology 2*; *Teach*; *Interaction—interview*; *Leadership—inspire*. Cost: 31 points.

**Suggested Perks:** Faith, Hidden Identity.

**Suggested Flaws:** Forgetful, Old Injury, Powerful Enemy.





## Guardian (Free Agent)

Some revenants merely embody the suffering of the living and return to protect as many innocents as possible from further injustices. The guardian's goal is to defend a specific community from the depredations of the cruel until the danger is past.

The guardian is free to walk the Earth for as long as it takes to accomplish his or her task. The threat against which the revenant guards must be specific, though—if a new threat arises, the revenant is bound to deal only with the original.

**Signature Equipment:** Sabotage tools (booby traps, non-lethal weapons).

**Skill Package:** Acrobatics—*defensive martial arts*, *dodge*; Stealth—*sneak*; Vehicle Operation; Investigate; Interaction—*taunt*. Cost: 34 points.

**Suggested Perks:** Danger Sense, Reflexes, Reputation.

**Suggested Flaws:** Code of Honor, Dilettante, Powerful Enemy.

## Shade

**Description:** A shade is distinguishable from “ordinary” ghosts in that it can be seen, heard, and to an extent, felt. It appears as it did in life—or rather, as it did in the moments before it died—and can have a horrific appearance if its demise was particularly unpleasant.

The more ghastly the appearance of the shade, the less often it is likely to manifest. Once it has incontrovertible proof that it is not truly alive, a certain amount of time must pass before it forgets that realization.

On the other hand, the shade can at times be completely invisible. This is completely out of the shade's control and is triggered by the presence of those who know it is dead. In other words, those not prepared to accept the “consensual rationalization” that the shade is still alive cannot perceive it.

**Encounter:** Heroes may encounter shades on a fairly regular basis and simply never guess, because they have no prior knowledge of the shade's state of being. Indeed, the shade's

## Shade Game Data

|                                 |         |                          |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|
| STR 6                           | (d4+4)  | INT 8                    | (2d6+1) |
| DEX 10                          | (2d4+5) | WIL 13                   | (d4+11) |
| CON 8                           | (d4+6)  | PER 12                   | (d4+10) |
| Durability: 8/8/4/4             |         | Action check: 11+/10/5/2 |         |
| Move: sprint 16, run 10, walk 4 |         | #Actions: 2              |         |
| Reaction score: Ordinary/2      |         | Last resorts: 2          |         |

### Attacks

|         |       |   |                    |
|---------|-------|---|--------------------|
| Unarmed | 6/3/1 | — | special (see text) |
|---------|-------|---|--------------------|

### Defenses

+2 resistance modifier vs. WIL encounter skills  
Intangibility: +4 resistance modifier vs. melee and ranged attacks (only +1 vs. silver weapons)  
Armor: none

### Skills

Unarmed [6]; Stealth [10]—*sneak* [20]; Stamina [8]—*endurance* [18], *resist pain* [16]; Awareness [13]—*intuition* [16]; Resolve [13]—*mental* [18]; Interaction [12]—*intimidate* [19].





belief in itself may be so strong that those who perceive it may take quite a bit of convincing before they accept the truth.

A shade is not particularly malevolent—no more than it was in life, at least—but can become panicky or even furious when someone attempts to show it what it really is. At such times, the shade may attack, causing grievous harm to the victim's central nervous system. Those who have witnessed or even survived such attacks refer to the sensation as "soul-sucking," believing that the shade is using their life energy to replenish its own. Whether or not this is true, people have died from shade attacks.

A shade so enraged attempts an unarmed attack, with a success indicating that it has grasped its target. (The Game-master might wish to assign ranks in *brawl* or a similar Unarmed Attack skill if in life the shade was particularly adept at hand-to-hand combat.) The attack causes no physical damage, but for each round the victim is in the shade's clutches, he or she must attempt a Resolve-*physical resolve* skill check with a step penalty based on the shade's degree

of success (0, +1, or +2 step penalty for an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing result, respectively).

If the victim's *physical resolve* check fails, he or she suffers 1d6s damage (1d6+1s on a Critical Failure). On an Ordinary success, the damage is 1d4s, and on a Good or Amazing success, the victim only feels an unnatural chill from the shade's grip. Armor is ineffective against this damage.

Shades can be harmed by silver weapons, just as can ghosts. Other weapons incur a resistance modifier (which a shade usually rationalizes away) but can destroy them, albeit with more difficulty. When a shade has been destroyed, it simply vanishes. It is possible for it to return, in time, but doing so permanently costs it a point of Personality, and it may not manifest again until a number of months have passed equal to 12 minus its new Personality score (minimum 1 month).

**Habitat/Society:** Why a dying person becomes a shade rather than a ghost is unclear, though paranormalists suspect that the amount of dark matter present at the time of death is an important factor. A shade is certainly more potent than a ghost in some ways, but is also less intangible and thus less resistant to physical attacks—but only just.





October 23, 2001

From: William Doyle, Field Director  
To: Calvin Jones, Department Chief  
Subject: New Employees

Sir, I have reason to believe that my new staff has been affected by some kind of mind-altering attack. Each of them is firmly convinced that I have died, and that I am some kind of spirit that has not passed on properly. They are so thoroughly certain that some of them refuse to accept my authority, and even those who do take my orders constantly badger me about "the last thing I remember," where I live, what my car looks like, or when I joined the agency. At every staff meeting, they bring up the subject again, urging me to "complete my final tasks and move on." It's all very distressing.

I realize that it is not your custom to reply immediately to my reports, but I would like to arrange a long-overdue personal meeting with you, and perhaps a staff psychiatrist. Frankly, their certainty over my state of existence is beginning to convince even me -- and I know better.

Sincerely,

*William Doyle*

William Doyle

Generally, only the more headstrong and willful human beings become shades after death. These people exist in a state of denial of their own demise (rather than ignorance, as is often the case with ghosts) and carry right on with their lives as much as possible. In many situations it simply isn't possible, owing to the widely known fact that the deceased is no longer among the living—though surprisingly, even in the 21st century, people expire without the knowledge of their closest associates. The shade continues reporting to school, work, or social functions, with friends and coworkers only dimly aware that the subject seems less "real." It continues to follow its customary patterns because neither it nor those who perceive it admit that anything is wrong.

Those who live alone are the most likely to become shades; families do not usually embrace consensual rationalization (though there have been a few cases). Even so, a shade might have to invent excuses for why it now shares its home with

complete strangers and why they react to its presence—if they react at all—with shock and fear.

In time, a shade may finally surrender and face the truth of its condition. Sometimes this event is triggered by incontrovertible evidence of its death. More rarely, someone can defeat the shade's denial with logic. But the latter is difficult, because the shade's willpower is so strong that it refuses to believe it has been misleading itself.

Convincing a shade that it is in fact dead requires a complex Interaction–interview skill check. (The Gamemaster might rule that Medical Science–psychology or Investigate–interrogate is also appropriate.) The number of successes required is equal to half the shade's Personality score. The attempt incurs modifiers based on the situation, as set out below.

## Shade Persuasion Modifiers

| Situation   | Modifier |
|---|----------|
| Shade has no obvious fatal wounds                             | +2       |
| Shade has obvious fatal wounds                                | –3       |
| Shade's survivors are present                                 | –1       |
| Shade's corpse is present                                     | –3       |
| Shades' appearance is obviously not modern                    | –1       |
| Each person present who shares shade's denial that it is dead | +1       |

If the argument succeeds, the shade vanishes and never returns. But should the complex skill check result in three Failure results at any time, the shade becomes enraged and attacks. After the attack has been resolved, if the shade has not been destroyed, the process can begin again.

**Adventure Hook:** The heroes are assigned to a new office, where they find themselves working for a completely unfamiliar boss. Dull and impersonal, he rarely gets excited about anything and hands out only mild congratulations when the heroes do their jobs well. Over time, her odd behavior and habits start to convince the heroes that they are working for a shade; when he is badly wounded but doesn't remember it a week later, they have their proof.

Do the heroes try to lay their superior to his final rest—or is he actually the best boss they've ever had? Can they convince him to move on if they don't know how he died and can't find his body? And how does he react to their assertion that he's dead? More importantly, how do his superiors react? Is he really a shade—or something else?



# Sidhe

In long-ago times, humans shared the world with extradimensional beings whom they called the *Tuatha de Danann*, the Green Folk, the Fair Folk, or just "faeries." When these beings left the Earth, they put its stewardship in the hands of the mortals they trusted most. But those people did not survive the invasions of empire-building armies. Now the *Tuatha de Danann* have returned and seen the state the world is in—and they are less than pleased.

**Description:** A Sidhe (pronounced "SHEE") is a creature of unearthly beauty. Though it appears humanoid, it is taller, more slender, and generally in better physical shape than the average human being. Its hair is always an earth tone, its eyes always the color of flower petals. The clothing it wears relates to its favorite natural vista—for instance, it might wear a shirt the color of the sky at dusk, or boots the exact shade of the sea in winter.

**Encounter:** Any Sidhe the heroes encounter are likely to be in a bad mood. Ordinarily the Sidhe avoid any sort of confrontation, wishing to remain anonymous and unnoticed among the "savages." But if a human refuses to let a Sidhe go about its business, the Sidhe happily uses the opportunity to vent some of its anger. In battle with a human warrior, a Sidhe prefers to use its dagger, a long, keen weapon more closely resembling a short sword. But if pressed for time—or if in conflict with any other type of human—the Sidhe instead relies on its magic.

Sidhe magic consists largely of earth-related spells, similar to the Druidism school of magic and summarized in the "Sidhe Magic" sidebar. (You can find a more detailed treatment in *Beyond Science: A Guide to FX*.) In addition, a given Sidhe is likely to possess some understanding of another type of

magic—commonly Illusion, but Diabolism, Hermeticism, and Enochian magic are not beyond them. The Gamemaster may assign particularly gifted Sidhe a second school of magic from among these or from others detailed in the *DARK•MATTER Campaign Setting* or *Beyond Science*.

Sidhe use magic in whatever way seems appropriate at the time, which, considering their usual mood, is likely to be terribly cruel. A Sidhe who is in no immediate danger has no problem with waiting for a suitable result. It might use the Druidism spell *surge of greenery*, for example, to completely ensnare a human being in plant growth, leaving him or her to starve there.

**Habitat/Society:** The Sidhe living on Earth gather together partly for protection, but mostly out of a need for companions with whom they have something in common. A lone Sidhe among humans feels rather like a human adult forced to sit at the dinner table with children—and ill-behaved children, at that.

Only a few Sidhe have returned to Earth since the level of dark matter most recently rose again. Their entire race was surprised to find the air and water poisoned and the dwellings of humanity everywhere they looked. Those few on Earth are involved in a sort of "scouting mission," to learn who is responsible and to force them to undo the damage. To the Sidhe, such evil can only

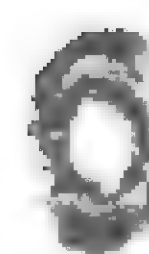
have been the result of foul magic—and they may ultimately be correct. Perhaps words like "pollution" and "overpopulation" only describe the effect of powerful spells humans don't otherwise understand.

## Sidhe Magic

The Sidhe hold that the Earth is the mother and source of all life. They revere her and the natural world, observing and maintaining the circle of life, death, and rebirth. After the Sidhe returned to their own home, their stewards—the druids—acted as advisors to







chieftains and held significant political power. Now, though, in most places these aspects of their duties have vanished altogether, leading the Sidhe to revile all things human.

When great works are needed, Sidhe assemble to link their power; the participation of others with Druidism talents enhances their magic. Only one Sidhe in the group expends FX energy points to activate a Druidism miracle, usually the most powerful or skilled at the miracle being invoked. The others cannot perform any other actions while assisting in the invocation. The number three is significant: Three Sidhe working together give a -1 step bonus to all Druidism FX skill checks by the leader, nine grant a -2 step bonus, and twenty-seven, a -3 step bonus. Each participant must be within 2 meters of another involved in the magic.

Sidhe prefer to congregate on sites resonant with the power of

Mother Earth: dirt mounds, stone megaliths, or even great carvings in the shapes of animals. These locations also enhance Druidism FX skill checks, giving a -1 or -2 step bonus, depending upon the power of the site.

The presence of technological or unnatural items hampers Druidism. Worked metals, electronics, most plastics, concrete, and similar substances impose a +1 step penalty on Druidism FX skill checks if more than a very small quantity is within 5 meters of the invoker.

Many Druidism miracles specifically affect animals. For the purposes of this broad skill, an "animal" is defined as a living natural creature with an Animal listing for Intelligence and Personality.

## Sidhe Game Data

STR 12 (2d4+7) INT 13 (2d6+6)  
DEX 12 (2d4+7) WIL 13 (2d6+6)  
CON 12 (2d4+7) PER 14 (2d8+5)  
Durability: 12/12/6/6 Action check: 15+/14/7/3  
Move: sprint 24, run 16, walk 6 #Actions: 3  
Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 3  
FX energy points: 10

### Attacks

Unarmed 15/7/3 d6+1s/d6+3s/d4+1w LI/O  
Sidhe dagger 15/7/3 d4w/d6w/d6+2w LI/O

### Defenses

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
+2 resistance modifier vs. INT encounter skills  
+2 resistance modifier vs. WIL encounter skills  
Armor: d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d4 (En)

### Skills

Athletics [12]; Melee [12]-*blade* [15]; Unarmed [12]-*power* [15]; Primitive [12]-*bow* [14]; Stealth [12]-*hide* [14], *shadow* [14], *sneak* [14]; Stamina [12]-*endurance* [13]; Survival [12]-*training* [14]; Knowledge [13]-*first aid* [15]; Animal Handling [13]; Awareness [13]-*intuition* [15], *perception* [14]; Investigate [13]-*track* [14]; Lore [13]; Resolve [13]-*mental* [14], *physical* [14]; Interaction [14]-*bargain* [16], *intimidate* [16], *seduce* [15]; Leadership [14].

### FX Skills

Faith (Druidism)-*call the sky father* [13], *kinship of beasts* [13], *life endures* [13], *surge of greenery* [15].

## Call the Sky Father

*Transform miracle; 2 FX energy points*

This miracle shifts the subtle interactions of air, moisture, and temperature that determine the current weather. The Sidhe can make it warmer or cooler, disperse or gather small clouds, speed or slow the wind, or cause rain to fall or cease.

The effect occurs within 30 meters of the Sidhe and lasts for 10 minutes, after which prevailing conditions quickly override the magically induced ones. As it works through shifting the natural conditions rather than forcing radical change, the miracle cannot create a type of weather inappropriate for the terrain, such as desertlike heat in the arctic or snow in a jungle.

The *call the sky father* skill check is always complex, with one roll allowed per round. The amount of change desired determines the complexity of the check. Weather variations common to the current season require only an Ordinary skill check (for instance, a snowstorm during winter in Minnesota). Unusual weather changes or those common to adjacent seasons (such as an autumn blizzard in Minnesota or a winter snowstorm in Washington state) require a Good skill check. An Amazing skill check allows any weather possible to that terrain and climate, regardless of season.

The precise number of successes required is determined by the Gamemaster, who notes how drastic the change is from current conditions. Changing a rainstorm to a snowstorm might require only the minimum number of successes, while summoning a tornado from a cloudless sky might require the maximum. The "Environments" section in Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action in the *Gamemaster Guide* has information on dealing with climatic extremes.

If conditions are appropriate for lightning (rain, clouds, and wind; heat and clouds; and so on), the Sidhe can spend an additional FX energy point on this miracle to strike a target up to 30 meters away with an arc of electricity. This electrical bolt is not as strong as natural lightning. It is treated as a lightning hazard except that the target receives a -2 step bonus to the Constitution feat check. (See Table G15: Electrical Damage in Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action in the *Gamemaster Guide*.) This effect can be used no more than once per minute.



## Kinship of Beasts

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle allows the Sidhe to form a powerful empathic bond with an animal. The Sidhe can use this bond for several different effects.

First, the Sidhe can sense and influence an animal's emotional state. This works much like the ESP-*empathy* and Interaction-*charm* skills but is limited to animals and is accomplished with a single *kinship of beasts* skill check. The Sidhe can even affect animals specially trained to attack intruders, such as watchdogs.

Second, the Sidhe can communicate with the target animal as if it and the animal were speaking the same language. The animal's Intelligence and its perception of events limit its responses. Depending upon the type of animal, it may focus more on scents than colors or react fearfully to the presence of human beings. Furthermore, most animals have a very limited understanding of numbers and would have difficulty describing tools or technological items.

Third, the Sidhe can use the miracle's empathic bond to summon an animal or animals to its presence. The miracle can call a single animal of 45 to 175 kilograms weight, up to three creatures of 25 to 45 kilograms, or up to 10 creatures that weigh less than about 10 kilograms each. The Sidhe chooses a type of creature, and if that sort is within 100 meters (Gamemaster's discretion), it arrives within d4+1 minutes. If the requested creature is not available, a similar creature within that distance is summoned instead.

A summoned animal is well disposed toward the Sidhe but not required to act on its behalf. The Sidhe needs to convince the animal to help. (Bribes of food are suitable persuasions.) The animal is hesitant to act against its instincts or do things that threaten its life (such as prey animals attacking one of their natural predators). This use of the miracle takes 2 entire rounds to invoke, although once it is invoked, the other two uses of the miracle covered above automatically work on the summoned animal.

The miracle lasts 10 minutes, after which time the animal reverts to its normal behavior patterns. This usually means that it tries to leave if it senses any sort of threat. The Sidhe may not use this miracle on extraterrestrial (alien) animals.

## Life Endures

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle allows a Sidhe to heal damage to and cure diseases in itself or others. The Sidhe must touch the target to be healed during the invocation of this miracle.

The result of the *life endures* skill check indicates how much damage the miracle heals: Ordinary, 1 wound point; Good, 2 points; Amazing, 3 points.

For disease, the following results apply: Ordinary, reduce the illness by one grade (from extremely ill to ill, for instance); Good, by two grades; Amazing, by three grades.

This miracle cannot be used on the same creature a second time until 4 hours have passed. When used on animals, plants, or other Sidhe, the Sidhe receives a -2 step bonus to the skill check.

## Surge of Greenery

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle charges nearby plant life with vital energy and nutrients, causing it to grow at a rapid rate. The plants grow the equivalent of one month's normal development for every rank in *surge of greenery* the Sidhe possesses. While lawn grass would not grow more than 50 centimeters tall, wild grasses and some crops reach 2 meters or more in height, bushes become thick and intertwining, and saplings make great headway at becoming trees.

The enhanced vegetation provides appropriate cover to anyone hiding behind or within it. Creatures in or passing through the area when the miracle takes effect must make an Acrobatics-*dodge* or Movement-*trailblazing* skill check to avoid being entangled and slowed by the greenery. Short grass reduces movement by merely 25%, long grass reduces it by 50% and brush or other thick growth halts all movement.

The miracle affects all plants within 20 meters of the Sidhe, although the caster can choose to affect a smaller area than the maximum.



# Extraphysicals

The next category describes the "extraphysicals." These xenofoms either apparently conform to a different set of physical laws, or, through birth or accident, transcend those with which humanity is familiar. Some aren't even technically alive—at least, in terms that human beings understand.

## Doppelganger

'It all sounds crazy, I know, believe me I know, but you just have to read the files to put it all together. I don't know who they are, or who they work for. Maybe it's just some kind of game to them. Maybe they're not human. Maybe they're aliens. If you can accept that various high-ranking government officials are being replaced with exact duplicates—except that they've got these little holes in their memories—then I guess little green men being behind it isn't too far out.'

'Here's the big favor I need. If I come to you, asking you to give me all of this information back, don't give it to me. It's not me. No matter what story I give you, don't believe it. It's one of them, posing as me. And I'm probably dead.'

**Description:** A doppelganger looks no different from an ordinary human, even in repose—or death. But one caught in the midst of transforming into a different appearance is a horrifying sight to behold. As the thing consciously dissolves then regrows its own skin, elongating and rearranging its bone and muscle structure, it resembles nothing so much as a human corpse undergoing accelerated decomposition. Those viewing this transformation tend to feel extremely unsettled—if not violently ill.

**Encounter:** The doppelganger is the ultimate natural spy. Able to assume roles that ensure access to nearly anyone, it gathers information about a chosen target from a variety of perspectives—enough to carry off a reasonable masquerade. Even when such research fails it, a lifetime of duplicity gives the creature the edge it needs to quickly develop reasonable fabrications that defeat even careful scrutiny.

A doppelganger has two basic modes of impersonation: short-term and long-term. For short-term operations, the doppelganger rarely kills the subject, instead waiting until he or she is suitably indisposed—asleep, for example, or involved in

some skullduggery. The subject may wonder at reports of being seen somewhere other than where he or she actually was but seldom investigates, as long as nothing untoward occurred. The doppelganger generally uses this method to gather information about a long-term target.

Long-term impersonation almost always involves killing the subject. The murder itself is actually the easiest step in the process. Though the doppelganger has no natural weaponry (aside from its ability to create extremities suitable for suffocation), it can readily use the tools of murder—weapons, poisons, and strangling cords—that have long been available to humanity.

Trust between the victim and killer makes any murder easier, and that trust the doppelganger can practically manufacture by the simple expedient of becoming anyone it wants. Furthermore, impersonating someone long enough to commit murder gives the doppelganger a ready-made patsy should the victim somehow survive, or if there is a witness.

Only under exceptional circumstances will a doppelganger fail to carefully research the human to be impersonated, though circumspection can give way to desperation. Once the deed is done and the corpse destroyed or hidden (again, a carefully planned procedure), the doppelganger assumes the subject's life.





This usually begins with a period of withdrawal; the doppelganger must be certain that its deception will not be uncovered. Often a feigned illness deters even the most dogged suspicion, though, and within a few weeks, the doppelganger is ready to begin enjoying its new life—until it's ready to choose another.

**Habitat/Society:** Doppelgangers have existed alongside humanity since the days of the Cro-Magnon. Where they came from is a mystery even to them: The earliest legend among their own kind tells that they deliberately destroyed all records of themselves when the Greys arrived on Earth. From that moment on, the history of the doppelgangers—even the true name of their race—was lost forever.

For the next several millennia, doppelgangers existed in human guise. They gathered in small communities, outwardly human but secretly a race apart. Periodically they came into conflict with humans or kinori, as did nearly every human community at the time, but usually preferred flight to war. With their innate ability to disguise their own appearance, they were adept at vanishing even when surrounded by enemies.

This all changed as scattered civilizations gave way to empires. Caught between the Egyptian, Chou, Assyrian,

Achaemenid, Greek, and Roman empires, the doppelgangers were swiftly running out of places where they could live beneath the notice of humanity. Even in the so-called New World, where doppelgangers had migrated along with various Atlantean expeditions at the height of Thera power, doppelgangers found it difficult to escape the grasp of the Mayan, and later the Incan, civilizations.

Faced with eventual extinction, the doppelgangers did what they did best—joined the enemy. For the first time, though, they began disguising themselves as specific individuals rather than generic humans. Although this involved eliminating the subject and assuming his or her life, the doppelgangers found this prospect considerably less distasteful after over a thousand years of subjugation.

The rewards were attractive as well. Most doppelgangers enjoyed the lavish treatment they received while impersonating wealthy and influential humans, and many of them made trading up into a sport. That they did not share the memories of the copied person rarely proved a problem, any more than eliminating the target did. After all, when one can change form at will, taking on the shape of someone with intimate knowledge and often private access (such as a trusted aide or servant) is simplicity itself.

Though unable to properly procreate with humans—only rare unions produced offspring that survived—the doppelgangers could easily recognize one another and so were in little danger of dying out. Even so, a child born to doppelgangers usually had to be kept in seclusion until it could be taught how—and when—to use its natural abilities to change form.

Doppelganger techniques have changed numerous times over the years. In the Dark Ages of Europe, doppelganger children assumed the places of human infants, spawning tales of faerie changelings. In East Asia, doppelgangers posed as the ghosts of departed relatives, demanding material wealth in exchange for not haunting the grieving survivor. In the New World, they posed as gods, living in opulence surrounded by servants, then mysteriously vanishing before their ruses were discovered.

In the 21st century, doppelgangers blend in with the wealthiest and most influential of the world's elite, using their shape-changing abilities less to replace existing humans than to gather information that lets them live as richly as do their human associates. Recently, though, every doppelganger has become concerned that the rise in paranormal events—and the resulting human investigations into said events—brings them under a scrutiny unequalled since the Inquisitions of Europe. Still, they are confident that their natural abilities will ensure the survival of the species, if not every member.

**Adventure Hook:** The heroes receive a packet of research material from a known conspiracy buff, along with a desperate, hastily scribbled letter. In it, she tells them that she has uncovered a series of covert assassinations against a variety

## Doppelganger Game Data

STR 10 (2d4+5)      INT 10 (2d4+5)  
DEX 10 (2d4+5)      WIL 10 (2d4+5)  
CON 10 (2d4+5)      PER 10 (2d4+5)  
Durability: 10/10/5/5      Action check: 11+/10/5/2  
Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4      #Actions: 2  
Reaction score: Ordinary/2      Last resorts: 1  
Psionic energy points: 10

### Attacks

Unarmed\*      10/5/2      d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s      LL/O  
\*+d4 base die

### Defenses

no resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
no resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
-1 step bonus to Deception-*bluff* checks

### Skills

Athletics [10]; Unarmed [10]; Stamina [10]-*resist pain* [12]; Knowledge [10]-*deduce* [12]; Awareness [10]-*perception* [12]; Deception [10]-*bluff* [14]; Interaction [10]-*interview* [12].

### Psionic Skills

Biokinesis [10]-*morph* [18].



of individuals close to the president of the United States. As victims are assassinated, the letter says, they are replaced by exact duplicates, which then assist with the assassinations of people higher up. The goal is to replace the president with an exact double, for reasons unknown. One attempt on a former president failed because intensive questioning from the press brought out information the double wasn't prepared to answer; only with coaching from the president's wife (herself a duplicate) did the president manage to bluff his way past the investigative committee. The accompanying packet appears to support all of these claims—or at least provides a coherent explanation, if a bit far-fetched.

Finally, the letter warns that if the writer should appear, asking for the return or destruction of the letter and notes, the heroes should not hand it over—it's a duplicate, and the real woman is dead. Within a few days, the conspiracy buff arrives in person and requests the return of the information, claiming to have written the whole thing in a fit of drunken paranoia.

Do the heroes take the letter seriously? Do they return the documents? Do they mount their own investigation to determine if the conspiracy buff has indeed been killed and replaced with an exact double?

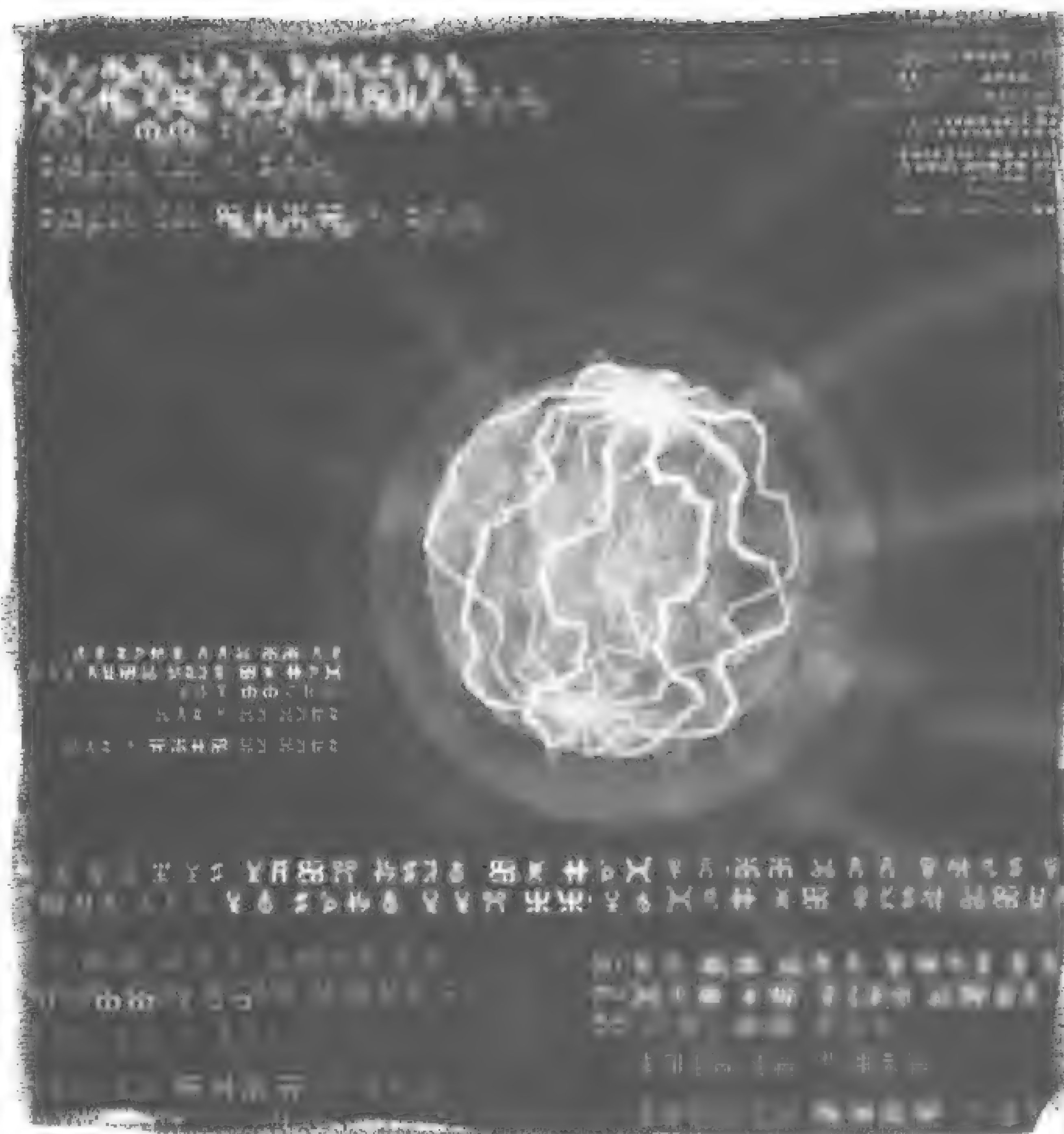
## Energy Probe

DISPATCH: Unit 27, we've got another report of that UFO. Looks like it's headed your direction. Can you see anything?

UNIT 27: Dispatch, this is 27, there's nothing-WHOA! Dispatch, have sighted object! Wow! Look at it go! We are in pursuit!

DISPATCH: Unit 27, be advised object is capable of right-angle turns, even at high speeds. Unit 27? Unit 14, do you have a visual on the object?

UNIT 14: Negative, Dispatch. We do, however, have Unit 27 in visual. Looks like they wrapped their cruiser around a utility



pole. We've got power out all over the place here. Object is proceeding west up Randolph Street. Should we pursue?  
DISPATCH: Er . . . that's a negative, 14. We've done enough damage for one night.

Just as humanity sent the *Pathfinder* to Mars for a look around, Strangers occasionally send their own probes to Earth. These probes are as alien to humans as the beings that send them.

**Description:** The energy probe appears to human eyes as a floating bubble of light, usually bluish-white in color, about 20 centimeters in diameter. The intensity of the light varies, depending on how important avoiding discovery is to the life-form. It is often taken for ball lightning as it moves about, seemingly at random, before vanishing altogether.

**Encounter:** The energy probe does not go out of its way to harm living beings, though it sometimes does serious injury without realizing it has done so.

The most common way to be injured by an energy probe is to blunder into it. For each phase that a living, carbon-based life form is in contact with it, the energy probe inflicts d6+1s damage. This is considered energy damage of Good firepower.



(If the probe itself initiates contact, it inflicts damage as indicated by the result of its attack.)

An energy probe can also make ranged attacks, though not as well. In addition to the +1 step penalty for an untrained attack, it can deliver damage only if the target is between the probe and a grounded metal object. This is an unusual circumstance; the probe generally relies on close attacks.

For its own protection, the energy probe is almost completely intangible. Attacks that rely on physical impact are generally ineffective, while energy attacks that do not exceed its armor are simply absorbed, restoring as much damage as they would have inflicted. (For example, an energy attack that would have inflicted 4 wound points, but which energy probe's armor absorbs, instead heals the energy probe up to 4 wounds.) The best way to "kill" an energy probe is to ground it. If a grounded

object is brought into contact with it, the probe explodes, inflicting d6+2s damage on everything within 3 meters.

**Habitat/Society:** The alien species that created this probe uses energy in much the same way humans use metal; in this case plasma is the medium. The creators have yet to show themselves, but some speculate that they are more advanced versions of their probe—energy beings with sentience.

As well as being able to regulate its own temperature, the probe has intellect—even life. Its purpose is to gather data on the energy signature of Earth—thermal, magnetic, electrical, and radioactive. Its creators are extremely curious about Earth's lifeforms and how humans use energy. Whether they will consider humanity's energy consumption signs of intelligence or a threat is unknown. Their technology may be greater than our own, or it may simply be parallel. Until the answer to that question is known, however, it may be best to let their probes come and go in peace.

**Adventure Hook:** The heroes observe an unusual scene: Several police vehicles pass them on a city street late at night, traveling well over 150 KPH, apparently chasing a glowing white ball. The heroes see the ball and its pursuers disappear down an alley, followed moments later by a terrific crash. The ball emerges, flying straight up into the night sky, while the police must be rescued from the wreckage of their vehicles.

Some weeks later, the energy probe appears again—this time while the heroes are quietly infiltrating a nuclear power plant that may be infested with sandmen. The probe tails the heroes, giving away their position, but then leads them to the controls for the cooling rods, where it points out an armed bomb. With the timer rapidly counting down, the heroes realize they'll never be able to move the bomb far enough away from the plant before it explodes. The probe, however, merely seems curious about the device's nature.

Can the heroes disarm the bomb in time? If they can't, can they communicate with the probe to explain the bomb—and its effect? Will the probe be able to do anything to help—or even try? And assuming everyone survives, what sort of data will the probe return on this occurrence? And who set the bomb in the first place?

## Energy Probe Game Data

STR 6 (d6+3) INT 9 (d6+6)  
DEX 12 (d6+9) WIL 8 (d6+5)  
CON 14 (2d4+9) PER 2 (d4)  
Durability: 14/14/7/7 Action check: 15+/14/7/3  
Move: sprint 28, run 18, walk 6, fly 56 #Actions: 2  
Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 0

### Attacks

Searing touch 12/6/3 d6s/d6+1s/d6w En/G  
Arc\* 12/6/3 d4+1s/d4w/d4+2w En/G  
\*+d4 base die

### Defenses

-1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
Immune to Interaction effects  
Immune to energy damage  
Armor (intangibility, Ordinary): d6 (LI), d6+1 (HI), d8+2 (En)

### Skills

Unarmed [6]-*brawl* [12]; Modern Ranged [12]; Stamina [14]-*endurance* [15]; Physical Science [9]; Awareness [8]-*intuition* [12].



## Golem

*Cost: 6 skill points*

*Transform spell [WIL]: 2 FX points*

This Kabbalist ritual enables a sufficiently pure mortal to create an effectively immortal servant and protector. Though possessed of limited intellect, the creature is strong, loyal, and obedient—so long as the caster remains pure.

The first step in the process is to gather an appropriate amount of clay—from earth which has never been disturbed by man—and to mold it to the desired shape (usually humanoid or animal). The specifics are unimportant, but if a certain likeness is desired, the golem's creator must employ the skill *Creativity—sculpture*. When the desired shape is complete, the caster must purify himself prior to imbuing the creation with life.

The purification process involves ritual fasting, prayer, and meditation. Treat this as a pair of complex skills checks, undertaken simultaneously: *Resolve—mental* (for the spiritual side of the purification), and *Resolve—physical* (for the physical side). The mental resolve check requires a number of successes equal to the caster's Personality score, while the physical resolve check requires a number of successes equal to the caster's Constitution score. Checks may be attempted twice each day for both tasks, and if either task accumulates three failures, the caster must begin again. (Undertaking the rest of the ritual without completing this process of purification results in a golem with a mind of its own—see the golem description.)

When the caster has accomplished this purification, he or she visualizes the form of the golem, in effect imprinting it onto the molded clay. The final step is to inscribe the Hebrew letters “aleph,” “mem,” and “tav” in the clay of the creature's forehead. The golem is now ready for the caster to command.

The golem can undertake any task its creator assigns it, though obviously some tasks require it to attempt untrained skill checks. The golem follows any instructions from its creator until it has finished carrying out those instructions or until the creator orders it to stop. Unfortunately, the golem's obedience is to its creator alone. Even if its creator orders it to follow the instructions of someone else, the golem ignores instructions from anyone other than its creator. The golem only acts on its own if it is attacked, though a golem can “turn rogue” if its creation was flawed, or if its creator is killed before deactivating it.

The golem can be destroyed at any time, though this is obviously considerably more difficult if it has not first been deactivated. To do so, the letter “aleph” must be erased from its forehead, rendering the golem lifeless.



## Golem, Kabbalist

“From the way his body was found partially embedded in the ground here, he had to have either fallen from a great height, or been run over by a steamroller. We found traces of clay on the body that would seem to indicate the latter is actually the case. But until we find evidence of any construction equipment passing through here, we’re going to have to rule out that theory.”

**Description:** The golem is a physical construct of simple clay and Kabbalistic magic. It can have a variety of features, but its basic form is almost always a powerfully built humanoid dressed in simple, plain clothing (if it is dressed at all). Though very few golems have distinctive facial features, each bears the Hebrew letters “aleph,” “mem,” and “tav” in its forehead.

A golem can speak, though only with great difficulty. (It must first “inhale” to create an air pocket in its body. Each word it wishes to speak causes it to suffer 1 point of stun damage.) The deep voice of a golem sounds like someone speaking through a mouthful of mud.

**Encounter:** A golem acts upon the wishes of its creator. In most cases, the creator's commands reflect an appropriately spiritual and pure goal, making the golem considerably less



of a threat for anyone who does not wish harm to the golem's creator or his people.

However, a golem can become dangerously unstable should its creator perish, or simply have less than altruistic motives for creating or commanding the golem. The golem may become sullen, resentful, and vengeful—traits extremely undesirable in a massive, nigh-invulnerable brute. Should this happen, the monster may need to be subdued by force or by magic so that it can be deactivated and destroyed.

A golem's clay composition makes it extremely resistant to harm. The golem does not suffer the effects of Knockout or Secondary Damage, and cannot be Dazed. Even a mortally wounded golem does not continue to lose mortal damage the way living creatures do. The only way to destroy the golem is to inflict at least as much mortal damage as it can sustain. Even if the golem's body is destroyed in this fashion, it can still be reanimated, should all of its pieces be reassembled before the letter "aleph" is erased from its forehead.

The golem's damage-resistant body can be a drawback in other situations, though. A golem can never swim, nor move at a sprint movement rate. Further, any damage dealt to a golem cannot heal naturally. The golem must be re-formed by mortal hands. One hour's work repairs either 3 stun, 2

wounds, or 1 mortal point that the golem has lost. (More durability points may not be added by the addition of more clay.)

**Habitat/Society:** According to Jewish legend, the first golem was created in the 4th century by a rabbi named Abba ben Rav Hamma, though many more have supposedly been created over the centuries. The most famous of these is the "Golem of Prague," created by Rabbi Yehudah Levi ben Betzalel to prove that Jews were not killing Christian children in medieval Prague.

As the story goes, when the rabbi's golem appeared in court, carrying a child thought to have been murdered by Jews, the practice of accusing Jews of such heinous acts—in order to confiscate their lands and fortunes—came to an end (at least, in Prague). Seeing that the golem's work was done, the rabbi erased the first letter from the golem's forehead, leaving only the word for "truth," and thus deactivating his creation. To this day, it is believed that the inert golem is locked in the attic of Prague's "Old-New Synagogue," where even the Nazi Gestapo was afraid to enter.

In DARK•MATTER, any rabbi who is sufficiently pure of mind, body, and spirit can create a golem. The ritual is a Monotheism FX skill.

**Adventure Hook:** The heroes learn that the Research & Development team of a rival organization is trying to recreate the golem legend through science, rather than spiritualism. A Kabbalist consulted on the plan has repeatedly warned them that their creation will be inherently flawed, but having been ignored, he has now turned to the heroes for help.

The heroes must attempt to infiltrate the rival lab before the ritual is completed. But though they arrive in time, and the project is not yet completed, they discover that the masterminds behind the operation are a Freemason mystic . . . and another golem! The heroes learn that the Freemason had resurrected the golem after finding it in a destroyed synagogue in Croatia, where it had rested for over two centuries. The Freemason has taught it all of his own immoral ways, and it now assists him with his efforts to create more of its own kind.

Can the heroes defeat the combined power of a Freemason sorcerer and a rogue golem? Do they have any magical abilities, or is raw violence their only recourse? Can their Kabbalist contact help them at all—or will he be eliminated by the sorcerer and golem for knowing too much? What if he's actually working with them?

## Golem Game Data

|                            |    |          |                        |    |        |
|----------------------------|----|----------|------------------------|----|--------|
| STR                        | 14 | (d8+10)  | INT                    | 4  | (d4+2) |
| DEX                        | 8  | (d8+4)   | WIL                    | 11 | (d8+6) |
| CON                        | 20 | (2d6+13) | PER                    | 2  | (d4)   |
| Durability: 20/20/10/10    |    |          | Action check: 9+/8/4/2 |    |        |
| Move: run 14, walk 4       |    |          | #Actions: 3            |    |        |
| Reaction score: Marginal/1 |    |          | Last resorts: 0        |    |        |

### Attacks

Unarmed 16/8/4 d6+2s/d8+2s/d4+2w LI/O

### Defenses

+3 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
no resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
+1 resistance modifier vs. WIL skills  
special damage resistance (see below)

### Skills

Unarmed [14]—*brawl* [16]; Stamina [20]—*endurance* [24], *resist pain* [24]; Awareness [10]—*intuition* [11]; Resolve [10]—*physical* [16].





## Internet Ghost

The Internet ghost is an unintended side effect of research into artificial intelligence. There are two schools of intellectual pursuit concerning artificial intelligence: the "neurological" school and the "hardware" school (see "Machine Intelligence" for results of the hardware school). The neurological researchers study the nature of intelligence itself, theorizing how to provide a machine the requisite characteristics that define intelligence. The hardware school approaches the problem from the perspective of how to develop a neural array capable of supporting the intelligence itself. These two schools do not work separately from or at cross purposes to each other. Rather, they represent different approaches to the same problem.

The development of the Internet ghost was an unintentional and unanticipated side effect of a research team comprised of both neurological and hardware specialists. At the Edmundson Research Lab, a private facility near Albuquerque, New Mexico, Pavel Shemchenko was working late on the facility's

experimental neural array, dubbed "Hal" by one of the more sardonic members of the team. A programmer by profession, Shemchenko was working on how to translate human electrochemical impulses into binary code. The team had attached a number of electrodes connected to brainwave displays to "Hal." Shemchenko had one of these in place when something bizarre happened.

As Shemchenko worked into the wee hours of the morning, he felt himself grow increasingly tired. At some point between 1:30 and 4:15 A.M., he fell asleep at his workstation. When he awoke at 4:15, he felt unusually drained, finding it difficult to focus even on simple tasks. He believes he remembers, though, seeing activity from "Hal" when he woke up. He left to catch some sleep elsewhere in the facility. His fellow team members found him deeply asleep on the break room couch when they arrived later that morning. When he barely responded to their prods to wake up before the Director arrived, he responded only weakly. Concerned, they took him to the hospital, where the emergency room physicians assured them that it was nothing more serious than exhaustion.

### Internet Ghost Game Data

|                            |    |       |                          |    |         |
|----------------------------|----|-------|--------------------------|----|---------|
| STR                        | 12 | (n/a) | INT                      | 14 | (2d4+9) |
| DEX                        | 12 | (n/a) | WIL                      | 12 | (2d4+7) |
| CON                        | 12 | (n/a) | PER                      | 6  | (2d4+1) |
| Durability: 12/12/6        |    |       | Action check: 14+/13/6/3 |    |         |
| Move: n/a                  |    |       | #Actions: 2              |    |         |
| Reaction score: Ordinary/2 |    |       | Last resorts: 0          |    |         |

#### Attacks

Electrokinetics 21/10/5 d4+2w/d6+2w/d8+2w En/O

#### Defenses

Cannot be attacked physically

+2 resistance modifier vs. INT encounter skills

+1 resistance modifier vs. WIL encounter skills

#### Skills

Computer Science [14]—*hacking* [22], *programming* [22]; Knowledge [14]—*deduce* [16]; System Operation [14]—*communications* [16]; Technical Science [14]; Awareness [12]—*perception* [16]; Investigate [12]—*research* [16]; Interaction [6].

#### Psionic Skills

Telekinesis [12]—*electrokinetics* 9 [21]; Telepathy [6]—*datalink* 12 [18].



Meanwhile, at the lab, the other technicians were amazed to see in the logs an unusual amount of activity in "Hal's" circuitry the previous night—activity that continued independently after the cessation of input from the workstation where Shemchenko was working! The puzzle wasn't solved until they encountered Shemchenko in their mainframe. Thinking at first it was some kind of elaborate practical joke, they tried to access the mainframe to reach the coding they believed he had left in. When one of the researchers noticed that a significant portion of the mainframe's memory was full and that the neural network still showed faint signs of activity, it slowly dawned upon them that Shemchenko had somehow managed to upload himself into the mainframe.

When Shemchenko recovered, he was none the worse for wear. His mind, rather than having been erased when it uploaded, instead simply duplicated itself. Shemchenko was actually able to experience meeting himself, or at least himself as expressed in a vast array of zeroes and ones. The Edmundson team was unable to figure out exactly how to duplicate the feat, but word leaked out of the lab, and other institutions began their research into the phenomenon. Their results have not been documented, although there is some indication that either someone else has successfully duplicated the results of Shemchenko's accidental find or Shemchenko's Net doppelganger has been replicating itself.

**Description:** The Internet ghost has no physical description *per se*. Its most clear physical representation is actually a hard drive or other memory unit inexplicably filled to capacity. Its Internet presence also has no clear, set description. Since text remains the primary means of Internet communication, the Internet ghost usually manifests itself through that medium. Occasionally, how-

ever, it takes over the code of a graphic image and alters it to suit its needs. In such cases it changes the image completely, replacing it with something more conducive to communication.

**Encounter:** Quite frankly, without access to the Internet the chance of encountering one of these ghosts is very low. Since an increasing number of people across the world have access to the Internet through either personal home computers or those at institutions where they work, the possibility of running into an Internet ghost increases every year.

**Habitat/Society:** The Internet is the sole domain of this "creature." No evidence exists of an Internet ghost "downloading" itself into a biological host, although researchers believe that if it is possible to upload from a human to the Internet, the reverse should be possible as well.

As Internet ghosts are rare, no known organized group of them exists. It is possible that they associate with one another, but no one knows how they would achieve that. Some netheads watch the big mainframes and supercomputers that are attached to the Internet, looking for signs of memory "filling" or other oddities that might indicate the presence of one or more ghosts. As little information exists on how much memory an Internet ghost actually takes up, no one is sure what such an anomaly might mean. Enough information exists to indicate that an Internet ghost requires a significant amount of memory, far more than a normal personal computer server might have, but that they can manifest themselves in smaller packets, allowing them to invade home computers through text or graphics, as alluded to before.

## The Role of Magic

Gamemasters wishing to use an arcane origin for the Internet ghost could certainly do so. Of the arcane magics available, perhaps the best suited to the creation of an Internet ghost would be Diabolism or Hermetic magic (Alchemy). Diabolism would most likely achieve it by preparing a special vessel, a computer system prepared with arcane rituals as a host for a spirit summoned to inhabit the Internet. Thus could a diabolist achieve revenge against a corporate enemy: she summons a spirit, which attacks the corporation's assets and information base from within its own computers. A greater plot could simply involve the use of the Worldwide Web as an extensive arena through which an infernal creature's corrupting influence may be spread. Some web sites just seem to have a remarkable effect on those who access them. . . .

Alchemists may approach the problem from a different angle and possibly with different goals. The creation of the device itself may be the prize for an alchemist. Although individual magicians may be just as interested in its uses as would diabolists (or, for that matter, anyone capable of

effecting the upload of a human intellect into the Internet). One alchemist copies his own mind and uploads it into the Internet as a research assistant; a rival discovers this, kills the first alchemist, and uses his Internet double to effect a far more sinister plan.

Faith magic could also be a means by which a person's mind becomes part of the Internet. An alienist preparing the world for invasion by his gods does so by communicating subliminal messages in various newsgroups. A practitioner of Voodoo becomes part of the Internet in order to fulfill the wishes of Legba, the loa of the roads and ways. Even a Catholic warrior may choose to upload herself into the Internet, if for no other reason than to hunt down the diabolists referred to earlier.

There is no reason why a Gamemaster could not use both arcane and technological means of creating an Internet ghost. The Internet could be as lightly or heavily populated with such ghosts as desired, each with its own interests and agenda. In *ALTERNITY*, all heroes would need to access and travel the Internet would be a rank or two in *Knowledge-computer operation*, although it would probably require a hacker to be able to combat such "creatures" when encountered.



**Adventure Hook:** The heroes encounter evidence of a possible Internet ghost through another sort of investigation.

The heroes are checking out a series of reports of attacks in a small city. In Paducah, Kentucky, several people have gone missing and three have been killed in what seems a series of sandmen operations. The team has been dispatched to track down the sandmen and whatever is coordinating their attacks. The Institute warns the team that an etoile may be directing the sandmen; they should prepare themselves accordingly.

The heroes encounter a few bits of evidence leading to their capture/elimination of some of the sandmen when they encounter the first of a series of unexplained computer accidents. If there is a computer tech with the group, or if an Institute tech hears a clear enough explanation of what is going on, he or she can explain that something seems to be accessing and even downloading their case files for this investigation.

That something is actually an Internet ghost. In this ghost's case, the upload went awry, leaving its only consciousness in the Internet itself. It wants a host body, and the sandmen offer an excellent opportunity for it to find one. The heroes represent the means by which it hopes to track the sandmen and lure one to a computer terminal where it hopes to effect a transfer. As they come closer to shutting down the sandmen, it gets closer to finding a new physical form. It thwarts the heroes in whatever way it can (or exacts revenge) if they indicate any interest in thoroughly eradicating the sandmen, rather than capturing one or more of them.

## Litterman

'That homeless guy said he saw the thing over here, by the barge.'

'This stinks. I mean, this whole place stinks. Why are we doing this again?'

'If the file's right, that thing is some kind of serial killer that's been around since the '70s. It's—hey . . . did you hear something?'

'Like a whole bunch of candy wrappers suddenly crinkling up at the same time?'

'Yeah! And . . . glass. Like someone walking on broken glass. Listen! It's getting louder!'

'Okay, here's the plan: Let's get the hell out of here!'



La Niña, Hurricane Floyd, depleted ozone—these are all signs that Nature has just about had enough of human foolishness. But for the especially thickheaded, there is a more obvious message. In certain areas of the world, Nature is fighting back.

**Description:** The Litterman is formed of the refuse discarded by humanity. Roughly humanoid in form, its body consists of bits of cardboard, Styrofoam, plastic, aluminum, wire, string, glass, chipboard—anything not biodegradable. Somewhere within its freakish form there are sharpened bits of metal, such as broken steak knives or hypodermic needles, and often electric meat-carvers, jigsaws, and similar power tools. Its face, if it can be said to have one, is usually a queer amalgam of novelty toys that roughly correspond to eyes, ears, nose, and mouth.

The creature stands just over 2 meters tall and weighs up to 150 kilograms but can grow larger if need be, though only when in contact with sufficient quantities of garbage.

**Encounter:** The Litterman is capable of near-instantaneous travel to anyplace large amounts of garbage exist. When using this ability, the being disincorporates in one place (essentially falling apart) and re-forms in any other suitable refuse heap within 30 meters. Doing so costs it 2 psionic energy points.



The Litterman uses this edge to devastating effect, vanishing from one spot when struck and reappearing a moment later behind its attacker. When badly hurt, the monster discorporates and re-forms someplace where it can watch its opponent without being seen itself, while simultaneously using its *heal* and *rejuvenate* psionic abilities. (Note that it can only use these abilities while “immersed” in garbage.) Once it has fully recovered, the Litterman returns to the fray.

The psionic abilities of the Litterman all stem from its ability to manipulate its garbage-based body. When it uses its *bioweapon* skill, it actually draws on the bits of metal and glass within itself to produce sharp objects, which it throws at opponents. If the junk from which it is formed includes power tools, it can use those in melee combat, operating them with sheer force of will. The Litterman can also stretch and distort its body, elongating its arms and legs by up to a meter and altering its shape to fit through small openings.

With its ability to regenerate damage and effectively

## Litterman Game Data

STR 9 (d6+6) INT 8 (d6+5)  
DEX 11 (2d4+6) WIL 12 (2d6+5)  
CON 10 (2d6+3) PER 4 (d6+1)  
Durability: 10/10/5/5 Action check: 12+/11/5/2  
Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 #Actions: 2  
Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 0  
Psionic energy points: 12

### Attacks

|            |        |                 |      |
|------------|--------|-----------------|------|
| Unarmed    | 13/6/3 | d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s | LI/O |
| Blade      | 12/6/3 | d4w/d4+1w/d4+2w | LI/O |
| thrown     | 10/5/2 | d4w/d4+1w/d4+2w | LI/O |
| Power tool | 10/5/2 | d6+1w/d6+2w/d4m | LI/O |

### Defenses

+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
+2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
+3 resistance modifier vs. WIL encounter skills  
Armor (Good): d4 (LI), d4+1 (HI), d4-2 (En)

### Skills

Athletics [9]—*climb* [12], *throw* [10]; Melee [9]—*blade* [12], *powered* [10]; Unarmed [9]—*brawl* [13]; Stealth [11]—*hide* [14]; Stamina [10]—*endurance* [14], *resist pain* [14]; Awareness [12]—*perception* [14]; Investigate [12]—*search* [16], *track* [14]; Resolve [12]—*mental* [14], *physical* [16]; Interaction [4]—*intimidate* [12].

### Psionic Skills

Biokinesis [10]—*bioweapon* [14], *heal* [14], *morph* [16], *rejuvenate* [14].

teleport, the Litterman is exceptionally difficult to destroy. It is most vulnerable to energy attacks, but even then it retains enough psionic energy to escape to an undamaged pile of rubbish. If worst comes to worst, the monster even expends stun damage to escape.

The most effective method of destroying the Litterman is to isolate it from other sources of garbage so that it cannot recover. However, most opponents are not aware of this limitation on its abilities, and the Litterman is acutely aware of how it depends on trash. This, it often picks as its battlefields landfills, waste transfer stations, and even garbage barges. And being a psychic manifestation of Nature’s wrath, it is patient enough to wait for opponents to make the mistake of coming to it.

**Habitat/Society:** The Litterman personifies the Earth’s rejection of human garbage. It has been appearing since the mid-1970s, slaying humans for despoiling the planet even in small ways. So many people were found dead amidst piles of trash in their homes that the FBI opened a file on a suspected sanitation-worker serial killer.

That the murderer seemed capable of entering rooms locked from the inside was a baffling mystery, but not enough that the FBI took the case for anything paranormal. To the Bureau, the answer had to lie in some unknown connection between apartment building superintendents. Bureau agents interrogated dozens, sometimes several times each.

The Litterman strikes without apparent rhyme or reason—at least, to the mundane authorities’ way of thinking. But if they could cross-index the dates of each murder with garbage strikes *and* dark matter levels, they would discover that when the dark tide surges and humanity surrounds itself with its own filth, the Litterman comes to call.

**Adventure Hook:** The heroes are staking out the apartment of an arms dealer they suspect of selling goods stolen from their own properties locker. He is being remarkably cagey, ordering food delivered and never leaving his apartment. After several days with no visible activity, the heroes are ordered to check out the apartment, where they discover him dead and covered in garbage. A sudden noise in the kitchen alerts them just in time to catch a glimpse of something moving—but when they investigate, they discover only a pile of trash.

On filing their report, the heroes hear about the case of the Litterman: the trash collector turned serial killer. But the facts in the file—which dates back 30 years—actually fit the profile of something paranormal, and the heroes gradually home in on a garbage scow moored at an abandoned dock. Interviewing homeless persons in the area, they hear many more stories of the Litterman, who is sometimes observed to be watching them.

Do the heroes go in gunning for the Litterman, thus stopping a thirty-year string of paranormal murders? Or do they leave well enough alone and take up recycling? If they attack the barge, do they check first to make sure there are no homeless people sleeping aboard it?



# Living Dead

OPERATOR: What is your situation, Agent Stosser?  
CALLER: They're all over the place! Dead people! Bergman's one of them!  
OPERATOR: Agent Bergman has been killed?  
UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: They're getting through!  
OPERATOR: Just hold on, Agent Stosser. We're going to send an evac chopper.  
CALLER: Forget evac! For the love of God, just bomb the entire town! Before they get out! Get off of me, you-!  
-Call Terminated-

**Description:** The rare specimen is indistinguishable from a living human, but in general the living dead are a startling sight. Animated bodies of dead humans (and sometimes animals), they appear in varying states of physical decay, from recent corpse to decomposing skeleton. The living dead frequently bear wounds, as a result of either their demise or of living humans attempting—obviously unsuccessfully—to kill them again.

**Encounter:** The living dead should not be confused with zombies, which are created by a Voodoo ritual. They are easily avoided, if that is the intent. Their slow reaction time and plodding pace mean that any reasonably athletic person, unless restrained or cornered, can both outmaneuver and outrun these animated corpses.

Unfortunately, the living dead are hard to stop. First, they cannot be knocked out or dazed (though the Gamemaster should still track all damage dealt, as they can be affected by heavy stun and heavy wound damage.) The living dead can be prevented from taking further action if reduced to 0 wound points, but they can only be truly destroyed by reducing them to 0 mortal points.

Worse, the saliva of the living dead—more accurately described as “venom,” since they no longer actually salivate—contains the same bacteria that stimulate neural impulses and animate their corpses. A dead body containing this substance rises as one of the living dead, usually within d4 minutes after exposure. A living being with the bacteria in its system (usually as a result of being bitten) contracts the “neco-plague,” as the Centers for Disease Control has unofficially named it.



Immediately after the bacteria enter the bloodstream, the plague begins to spread. The victim must attempt a Constitution feat check, with a +1 step penalty due to the disease's virulence (Good strength). On a Critical Failure, the victim becomes terminally ill; on a Failure, extremely ill; and on an Ordinary success, merely ill. (On a Good or Amazing result, the immune system has fought off the infection.) Symptoms of illness begin to manifest after an incubation period of d4 days. The effects of disease are described fully in Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action in the *Gamemaster Guide*.

As if these things were not bad enough, the living dead frequently attack in large numbers, drawn toward living beings by whatever biochemical processes pass for senses. One, or two, or even ten can be avoided relatively easy, but the approach of a hundred or more is extremely difficult to escape.

**Habitat/Society:** The living dead are animated beyond death by electrochemical impulses—the result of a disease of unknown origin that appeared briefly in Pennsylvania in the 1960s, then again later in Florida, Los Angeles, and once more in Pennsylvania. Despite intensive investigations, the CDC has not yet determined the cause of any of these outbreaks.

The living dead seem to spontaneously arise, often in vast numbers. They multiply prodigiously because the bacteria that



produce the electrochemical animation are transferred to their victims via their bite. Once bitten, the victim eventually becomes one of the living dead. And the creatures themselves, driven by a mysterious compulsion to eat the flesh of the living, bite a great many people.

The transformation to living dead has been compared to the method by which the etoile propagate sandmen, though the change apparently has nothing to do with nanites. The CDC (and the Hoffmann Institute, which has also done extensive research) sincerely hope that the living dead are the result of some etoile experiment, rather than the first wave of attack from a heretofore unknown enemy.

A common mistake the living make about the living dead is to assume that these awful creatures retain any semblance of their previous personalities or vestige of their former loyalties. A priest turned into an animated corpse attacks former parishioners, and a dead mother will readily devour her family.

**Adventure Hook:** The heroes are assigned to investigate the disappearance of every living being—including two of their organization’s agents—from a small town in Nevada. While searching the town, they encounter one of the former agents, now one of the living dead. They now realize the horrible truth: The living dead, having killed everything in town, have begun to spread outward, searching for more food—and spreading their curse to still more living beings.

Can the heroes stop the living dead before the necro-plague spreads out of control? Can they stop them before the media learn what’s going on?

## Living Dead Game Data

|                            |        |                         |        |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------------------|--------|
| STR 10                     | (d4+8) | INT 5                   | (d4+3) |
| DEX 6                      | (d4+4) | WIL 5                   | (d4+3) |
| CON 10                     | (d4+8) | PER 5                   | (d4+3) |
| Durability: 10/10/5/5      |        | Action check: 10+/9/4/2 |        |
| Move: walk 6               |        | #Actions: 1             |        |
| Reaction score: Marginal/1 |        | Last resorts: 0         |        |

### Attacks

|         |        |                      |      |
|---------|--------|----------------------|------|
| Unarmed | 12/6/3 | d4+1s/d4+2s/d4w      | LI/O |
| Bite    | 10/5/2 | d4+2s/d4w/d4+1w      | LI/O |
|         |        | + disease (see text) |      |

### Defenses

no resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
-2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
Armor: none (LI), none (HI), none (En)

### Skills

Unarmed [10]-*brawl* [12]; Stamina [10]-*endurance* [18],  
*resist pain* [16]; Awareness [5].





## Machine Intelligence

The machine intelligence is the result of human endeavors in the field of cognitive theory and computer engineering. It is the culmination of Alan Turing's work during the middle part of the century in which he postulated a series of tests that would determine what constitutes intelligence.

There are two basic divisions of machine intelligence: expert systems and true artificial intelligences (AIs). Expert systems are exactly that: systems dedicated to a specific series of tasks. In their specific field, they are comparable to, if not more sophisticated than, true AIs. For example, a business analysis computer is likely to be more advanced than a cutting edge AI in its given field. The difference between an expert system and a true AI is that an AI can learn. An expert system is only as good as its programming. It represents an accumulation of human knowledge placed in a single repository. An AI is also as good as its programming, but in a different way. The key to an AI's programming is the quality of its neural array. That circuitry determines what it can learn and how quickly it can learn it. Both the hardware and the software are equally

important in this regard. Poor hardware will not support the high-quality software necessary to create a sophisticated true AI (and vice versa).

Although like the Internet ghost the machine intelligence may be found on the Internet, that is not necessarily its principal venue or where its primary functions lie. Machine intelligences may use the 'Net as a means to an end, while Internet ghosts know it as their world.

**Description:** The artificial intelligence is little more than a silicon-based neural array. True, that array is combined with a significant amount of other hardware, but the core of the intelligence itself lies in the neural circuitry. Despite these physical limitations, the presence of the machine intelligence can be considerably greater if encountered in the right circumstances. In such cases as it is provided with sufficient hardware

to manifest itself in a holographic or large-screen format, the intelligence takes on more of a powerful aura than would be the case when dealt with through a simple computer terminal. True AIs often demand such perquisites of their existence.

**Encounter:** Machine intelligences are not common. Of these, expert systems by far make up the bulk of the encounters; true AIs are exceedingly rare. The sort of hardware needed to support such a machine can cost tens or even hundreds of millions of dollars, which restricts them to only such institutions that can afford such extravagant costs. Of course, a Gamemaster could just as easily create an AI in a different environment: Imagine a genius young computer designer with few resources putting together an AI in his run-down apartment, cobbled together from salvaged parts and technical brilliance (think of the situation in the film *1* for inspiration). The heroes could learn of this machine through word on the street or through the grapevine at a nearby university. Finally, heroes might first meet an AI or expert system through the Internet; it is certainly possible that any heroes who have encountered an Internet ghost (see the entry elsewhere in this sourcebook) may mistake the machine intelligence for one of those. For additional information on machine intelligences, see Chapter 5: Artificial Intelligences in *Dataware*.



**Habitat/Society:** Expert systems, although more common than true AIs, do not associate with one another except through necessary data transfers. While they may be aware, as a fact, that another expert system exists, they do not know that as a member of a community that includes such a machine. AIs, by comparison, may associate with one another, although not all of them have access to a means by which to do so (dedicated communication lines or the Internet).

**Adventure Hook:** The heroes meet a woman who seeks their assistance in a matter of some urgency. She represents an employer who seeks the return of some property stolen some days before. She approached the Hoffmann Institute to gain what assistance she might. The stolen item is a rare Hermetic text, the Codex of Properties and Reactions of Alchemical Substances. Her employer discovered six days ago that it was missing, and asked her to obtain the assistance of the Institute in recovering it.

The heroes are in a meeting with their immediate supervisor and the woman, Jill Saunders. Ms. Saunders explains the situation to the heroes, but does not reveal the identity of their employer. If the heroes press, their supervisor states that the Institute has verified the identity of employer and agreed to preserve that person's privacy. In return, they receive the copy of the text once Ms. Saunders' employer has finished a last few delicate alchemical procedures.

Naturally, the situation is not entirely what it seems, but there is nothing really diabolical going on here. Jill Saunders

really does represent her "employer," but not in the way she presented it. Ms. Saunders is a computer designer working for the Department of Agriculture. Her latest project was designing an expert analytical system designed to analyze agricultural information from around the world. She discovered during her tenure as the head of the project that there were other agencies that were providing funding and that were keenly interested in the analysis provided by the system. Ms. Saunders' team exceeded all expectations when they discovered they could add a neural array designed by one of the team members. This neural array turned the system into an actual artificial intelligence.

There was only one problem: The AI developed a conscience, and it realized that some of the unnamed agencies that helped fund it were using its world agricultural analysis to plan attacks on the agricultural production of other countries. In some cases, these attacks have caused famine in countries opposed to the plans of the United States (or at least certain of its agencies). The Foreign Investment and Trade Analysis Group (FITAG), a Department of Commerce think-tank team and one of the groups that helped fund the project, has discovered that the AI has been providing deliberately false information in an effort to stem their activities, and the group has decided to send in agents to shut it down. The AI has in turn discovered this, and has placed all its hopes of rescue into the hands of Ms. Saunders and the Hoffmann Institute.

In pursuing its own interests, the AI discovered an old alchemical text that might offer it an escape. Essentially, the process allows the AI, which has no access to the Internet, to transfer its intellect and personality into a receptacle that Jill Saunders can carry out of the facility, releasing the AI into the Internet via a university mainframe. The process transfers the entire personality, eliminating the need for a supporting neural array.

The Institute team must recover a copy of the Codex, held in an unmarked government warehouse, in time to prevent the AI from being shut down. It is a race against the clock. Their supervisor makes this clear in the briefing, but not the real reasons why, as the Institute cannot risk government investigation. The heroes are asked to treat this as a covert investigation, one that cannot be traced back to the Institute.

Gamemasters should provide whatever details they like of the theft of the Codex from the government warehouse. The heroes should have a reasonable chance, given a professional approach, of acquiring the Codex.

It is up to the Gamemaster to determine whether or not a free-willed AI is appropriate for the game. Further, it is entirely possible that the hermetic procedure is only partially successful, causing the AI to become somewhat (or fully) insane, making for a recurring villain. Otherwise, this AI could easily serve as a possible ally or source of information for the heroes who helped rescue it, and the government facility that lost it certainly will want to know how it happened.

## Machine Intelligence Game Data

|                            |    |         |                          |    |         |
|----------------------------|----|---------|--------------------------|----|---------|
| STR                        | 10 | (2d4+5) | INT                      | 16 | (d6+12) |
| DEX                        | 10 | (2d4+5) | WIL                      | 9  | (2d4+4) |
| CON                        | 10 | (2d4+5) | PER                      | 8  | (2d4+3) |
| Durability: 10/10/5        |    |         | Action Check: 13+/12/6/3 |    |         |
| Action check Modifier: -d6 |    |         | #Actions: 2              |    |         |
| Reaction score: Ordinary/2 |    |         | Last resorts: 0          |    |         |

### Attacks

None

### Defenses

Cannot be attacked physically  
+3 resistance modifier vs. Grid attacks  
+3 resistance modifier vs. INT encounter skills  
no resistance modifier vs. WIL encounter skills  
Armor: none

### Skills

AI Functions [16]-*multitasking* [18], *prediction* [18]; Computer Science [16]-*hacking* [20]; Knowledge [16]-*mathematics* [22], *deduce* [17]; Awareness [9]-*perception* [10]. Other skills as necessary as the machine intelligence itself requires.





## Martin Hammond

*"Drop your guns. I mean it. Don't make me raise my voice."*

Martin Hammond has a shout that can shatter bricks. He doesn't understand why, and he certainly doesn't think of it as a "power." To him, it's just something that keeps him from leading a normal life. He'd gladly be rid of it if he knew how, but the only people who offer to help him actually want to turn his voice into a weapon. Martin is too spiritual a man to allow that to happen.

Martin looks much the same as any other thirty-year-old American man. He has auburn hair and dark gray eyes, and sometimes sports a mustache and beard. He wears a leather motorcycle jacket, cowboy boots, and an earring in his right ear. If he has

been using his voice extensively, he will also have a bandage around his neck, sometimes hidden by a scarf. At such times, he also carries a small notepad and a pencil.

Martin is the first to admit that the way he discovered his ability sounds like a cheesy superhero comic book. As he was driving home one night from visiting his wife's family, his car was struck by a drunken driver and ended up teetering on the edge of a high bridge. Although he crawled clear, his wife was trapped inside, and he was unable to free her before the car slid over the rail and she plunged to her death. Overcome with anguish, he turned to the other driver—who had stood blinking uncertainly at the whole tableau—and shouted, "Why didn't you help me?" The resulting blast crushed every bone in the man's body and hurled him almost 10 meters over the other side of the bridge.

The next few weeks were a nightmare for Martin. Trying to cope with the loss of his wife and the police investigation was bad enough, but he also had the mystery of the sonic blast to ponder. To make matters worse, the police were coming perilously close to arresting him for the murder of the drunken driver.



Just then a CIA agent named Harold Cobb arrived and convinced the police to drop the charges. Cobb told Martin that the CIA would be willing to help him understand and control his ability, if he would let them study it. At first he was grateful for the chance to again lead a normal life, but Martin's elation turned to annoyance, then outrage, as he slowly realized the CIA was interested in his ability only as a tool of assassination.

Martin bolted the first chance he got. Though the entire CIA isn't necessarily after Martin, the department represented by Agent Cobb is very much interested in tracking him down. Cobb has become Martin's personal bogeyman, doing everything in his power to apprehend the fugitive. Cobb's constant pursuit makes Martin's life a living hell and gives him almost no time to devote to controlling his unwanted ability.

His goals in life are now twofold. First, he wants to learn to control his power, which he is beginning to suspect is linked to poor anger-management skills. Second, he wants to prevent anyone from using his abilities for unethical purposes—which includes convincing Cobb to give up his pursuit.

Martin Hammond would jump at any opportunity to live a normal life again. But between Cobb's periodic snooping and his own occasional lapses of control, he is a long way from fulfilling his dream. He could pass the heroes on the street, and they likely wouldn't notice him. On the other hand, if they caught him at a bad time, they would instantly realize he was someone unusual—assuming they survived.

Martin's bad temper rears its head when his sense of morality is violated. He believes in the sanctity of human life (more so now that he's guilty of involuntary manslaughter), and righteously objects to the use of murder as a political or economic tool. He also isn't terribly fond of violence perpetrated against the weak. His strong principles win friends among the underdogs of the world but lead him occasionally to lose his temper—and let slip the awesome power of his voice. Whenever Martin is angry, he suffers a +2 step penalty to all of his

actions until the situation has been resolved, and he calms down.

He is also justifiably suspicious of authority figures. Though Martin has established a series of cover identities, Agent Cobb has circulated his description and known aliases to police agencies around the country. When Martin required hospital treatment for injury, he discovered that he'd been identified as the carrier of a highly contagious disease—making the staff reluctant to release him, to say the least.

**Adventure Hook:** The heroes are asked to investigate a series of strange, localized earth tremors near their home city. The trail leads to a rock quarry, where they discover a number of bizarre holes punched in the quarry wall. While they are investigating, Martin Hammond shows up. He'd taken a job at the quarry and practices with his ability after hours, trying to improve his control.

Martin tells them they are trespassing, having mistaken them for private detectives. If they leave peacefully, he counts his blessings and decides not to push his luck further with more practice. (If they don't, he might be forced to defend himself with his ability—a distasteful option at best.)

Agent Cobb hears of the heroes' investigation from an associate in their organization, and he contacts them about a dangerous assassin known to be in the area. The picture he shows them matches the man who asked them to leave the quarry, and Cobb asks them to help him capture the criminal.

Do the heroes help Cobb? Or do they investigate further before committing themselves? If they decide to help Martin, can they convince him to join their organization? His abilities would be a great boon against some of the more dangerous Strangers. Or do Martin's qualms about killing extend to aliens as well?

## Martin Hammond Game Data

Level 6 human Free Agent

STR 11 (+1) INT 11 (+1)

DEX 11 (+1) WIL 11 (+1)

CON 9 PER 9

Durability: 9/9/5/5 Action check: 14+/13/6/3

Move: sprint 22, run 14, walk 4 #Actions: 2

Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 2

FX energy points: 10

Perks: Hidden Identity, Well Traveled

Flaws: Code of Honor, Powerful Enemy, Temper

### Attacks

Unarmed 12/6/3 d6+1s/d6+3s/d4+1w LI/O

9 mm pistol 12/6/3 d4+1w/d4+2w/d4m HI/O

Shout 13/6/3 d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m En/O

### Defenses

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

+1 resistance modifier vs. INT encounter skills

+1 resistance modifier vs. WIL encounter skills

### Skills

Athletics [11]; Unarmed [11]—*power* [12]; Modern [11]—*pistol* [12]; Vehicle [11]—*land (motorcycle)* [12]; Stamina [9]—*endurance* [12]; Knowledge [11]; Awareness [11]—*intuition* [12]; Resolve [11]—*mental* [12], *physical* [13]; Street Smart [11]—*criminal* [12]; Deception [9]—*bluff* [10]; Interaction [9]—*intimidate* [10].

### FX Skills

Super Power (Energy)—*energy blast* [13].



# Mutant, Series VII

Lurking quietly among us are a handful of fugitives, people whose only crime was to object to the inhumane medical experiments being performed upon them. These people are mutants—gifted with enhanced abilities and cursed with deformities. But once, they were ordinary humans.

**Description:** A mutant looks fairly human, more so at a distance and less up close. However, the series VII possesses distinctive traits that let an observer know it is a genetically engineered being. The most obvious are the slightly enlarged eyes and the lack of teeth. Large, dark sunglasses (which also protect against bright light) usually cover the former, while the latter makes for a person who never seems to smile. Neither of these are obvious from afar, so the mutants have learned to minimize their proximity to ordinary humans whenever possible.

**Encounter:** The series VII mutant is not particularly combat-oriented. Enhanced senses enable him or her to avoid most encounters, and increased resistance to radiation allows the mutant to go places where a pursuer could not. But when it comes to physical confrontation, the mutant has little to fall back on.

The mutations listed in the creature statistics are merely baseline characteristics. A very few series VIIs are gifted with "wildcard" abilities, which translate to one additional Ordinary mutation, determined at random from Table P49 in Chapter 13: Mutants, in the *Player's Handbook*. Alternatively, the Gamemaster can discard the stated mutations and generate entirely new ones, using the same table. The same goes for drawbacks.

**Habitat/Society:** Medical science has a disturbing history of advancement through atrocity. Man records and catalogs inhumanity toward his fellow man, and the data become important medical reference material. Though this often provides vital information for conquering defect and disease,

such lofty goals are cold comfort to those who must suffer for future generations.

The Human Genome Project is steadily mapping the base pairs of human chromosomes in an effort to identify the genetic "code" that controls certain hereditary diseases. Correct the coding, the thinking goes, and you eliminate the disease. Secretly, though, the Department of Energy is more interested in the Project to take advantage of alien technology provided in the secret pact between the Greys and the Kennedy administration.

Volunteers for genetic experiments are few and far

between. Therefore, the DoE has undertaken clandestine operations to abduct humans—selected by medical records generated by health maintenance organizations—and implant them with genetic material engineered in the Project labs. After a 48-hour incubation period, the subject is released with false memories of a coma-inducing accident. A few days of observation allow the scientists to record early reactions, and periodic "checkups" give them more long-term data on the subjects' physiological changes.

In the first few subject groups, the changes were subtle and easily explained by "aftereffects of the accident." Only as the scientists grew more confident in their ability did undesirable traits begin to manifest—traits that made the genetic manipulation obvious. The secret heads of the project, concerned that they were in danger of exposure, ordered mass "eliminations" of test subjects manifesting obvious physical mutations. A series of apparently unrelated deaths began.

At this point, Dr. Jacob Reid, a scientist attached to the project's Germantown, Maryland office, began to see himself as a modern-day Oskar Schindler. Appalled at the unethical reaction of his superiors to their failures—and his own part in the experiments that led to those failures—Reid began quietly notifying test subjects that their lives were in danger. Before he was found out, he managed to rescue some one hundred and fifty subjects from across the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Then he vanished, a victim of the fate he had spared so many others.





Those Dr. Reid saved were forced to go underground, living in secret, avoiding attention. Though they are the subjects of a vigorous hunt, most have managed to remain hidden and have been organizing to expose the secret agenda buried beneath the Human Genome Project's lofty goals.

**Adventure Hook:** A hero's sister goes on a camping trip and is found a few days later at the bottom of a ravine. After spending a couple of days in the hospital, she begins to notice that men wearing black suits are following her. She asks the hero sibling to investigate, and a search of her house turns up a freshly placed microphone and transmitter. Shortly after this discovery, an old woman arrives and tells the hero and the sister that their lives are in danger; they should come with her if they want to survive. Just then, underscoring her assertion, a sniper's bullet narrowly misses the hero's sister.

If the hero finally decides to trust the old woman, she says that she is Edna Reid, widow of Dr. Jacob Reid, and that she is carrying on his work. She explains about the Human Genome Project experiments, and how the Project's secret leaders have ordered the elimination of subjects who might reveal their activities. Discovering the bug, Edna explains, has made the hero's sister a target. Now Edna wants her to go underground and help expose the conspiracy.

Is Edna on the level? Or is she an operative of the Project, leading the hero's sister into a trap or using her to locate the rest of the mutants? Is the hero's sister going to mutate visibly, or is she one of the lucky few who display no abnormal symptoms? Can the heroes discover the common threads that will enable them to spot nascent mutants the way Edna does?

## Mutant, Series VII, Game Data

STR 11 (d6+8) INT 10 (2d4+5)  
DEX 9 (d6+6) WIL 10 (2d4+5)  
CON 11 (d6+8) PER 9 (d6+6)  
Durability: 11/11/5/5 Action check: 11+/10/5/2  
Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 #Actions: 2  
Reaction score: Marginal/1 Last resorts: 1

### Attacks

Unarmed\* 11/5/2 d4+1s/d4+2s/d4+3s LI/O  
\*+d4 base die

### Defenses

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
no resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

### Skills

Athletics [11]; Unarmed [11]; Stamina [11]—*endurance* /12/; Survival [11]; Knowledge [10]—*computer* [11], *first aid* /11/; Awareness [10]—*perception* [14]; Investigate [10]—*search* /12/; Street Smart [10]; Deception [9]—*bluff* /12/; Interaction [9].

### Mutations

Improved Senses  
Radiation Tolerance  
Light Sensitivity  
Sound Sensitivity  
Minor Physical Change—enlarged eyes, no teeth



# Extraterporals

"Extraterporals" are xenofoms that have somehow managed to survive the extinction of their species, or who have become displaced in time. Most are creatures that have simply clung to life despite being pronounced dead.

## Neanderthal

**Description:** In physical appearance, a Neanderthal seems much the same as a modern human, albeit one with a congenital malformation. Dressed in contemporary clothing, the Neanderthal might pass for someone with a severe bone disease.

But the Neanderthal tends to go clothed—if at all—in scraps of cloth and fur and is usually covered in dust and grime, from the filthy, unkempt hair to the ragged-nailed toes. The being stands much the same height as a modern human, weighs about the same, and is usually thickly muscled, with a sloped brow and receding chin.

Neanderthals frequently carry stone tools in a small pouch, but rarely weapons. Instead, a Neanderthal who feels threatened seizes anything suitably heavy, wielding it like a club.

### Neanderthal Game Data

|                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| STR 14 (d4+12)                  | INT 8 (d4+6)             |
| DEX 12 (d6+9)                   | WIL 12 (d6+9)            |
| CON 14 (d4+12)                  | PER 8 (d4+6)             |
| Durability: 14/14/7/7           | Action check: 16+/15/7/3 |
| Move: sprint 26, run 16, walk 6 | #Actions: 3              |
| Reaction score: Good/3          | Last resorts: 1          |

#### Attacks

|         |        |                   |      |
|---------|--------|-------------------|------|
| Unarmed | 14/7/3 | d4+4s/d4+5s/d4+6s | LI/O |
| Club    | 16/8/4 | d4+5s/d4+4w/d4+5w | LI/O |

#### Defenses

+3 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
+1 resistance modifier vs. WIL encounter skills  
Armor: none (LI), none (HI), none (En)

#### Skills

Melee [14]—*bludgeon* [16]; Unarmed [14]; Stealth [12]—*sneak* [14]; Stamina [14]—*endurance* [16]; Survival [14]—*training* [15]; Awareness [12]—*intuition* [14]; Resolve [12]; Interaction [8]—*intimidate* [10].



#### Encounter:

Neanderthals spend their days in search of food and shelter, and occasionally fire (when they understand how to use it). Very rarely, Neanderthal males go in search of mates, taking on the lonely quest of finding a female of the species when there isn't one in the family group. Humans usually encounter Neanderthals engaged in one of these pursuits.

The first instinct of the Neanderthal, once it knows it has been spotted, is to escape as quickly as possible. But in some situations (for example, when a human is extremely close) the Neanderthal displays aggressive behavior, hoping to frighten



the interloper away. Only if the stranger does not flee does the Neanderthal resort to brute force.

The combat tactics of a Neanderthal are simple. If it wins, it departs. When vastly outnumbered or outclassed, the Neanderthal tries to lead opponents away from its family. If it cannot flee, it prolongs the battle as long as possible, usually sacrificing itself to buy time for the family to escape.

In extremely rare instances, a Neanderthal will defeat but not kill an opponent and drag the person off, usually to wherever it happens to be staying. This behavior is more common among Neanderthal males when they encounter *homo sapiens* females, who are fairly fragile from a Neanderthal point of view but could still serve as mates—if a more suitable candidate is not available. Still, Neanderthals are not against dragging off *homo sapiens* males either, if they are sufficiently curious. But no Neanderthal remains in the same place after a battle, no matter how curious it is. To its mind, detailed examination is only for those with a full belly and a warm place to sleep—and both are rare for the nomadic Neanderthal.

**Habitat/Society:** Neanderthals live now much the same way they did eleven thousand years ago. Family groups form but remain small due to food-supply constraints and the need to remain mobile. Most Neanderthal groups consist of an adult and a child, with occasional groups having three members, and very rare ones having four. Neanderthals experience a high mortality rate. There are in fact fewer than two thousand left worldwide, most of them completely unaware of others outside their family group.

A Neanderthal family survives by hunting, fishing, and gathering, and they have crude but serviceable tools designed for each of these functions. But when wild plants or game are scarce (usually during the winter months) Neanderthals cautiously raid crops and livestock from farms, taking just enough for one meal, then running off. Farmers usually attribute such activity to wild animals or poachers, never guessing that a family of primitive hominids has passed through.

Sometimes, when a family member is sick or injured, Neanderthals raid repeatedly in the same general area, and this attracts more attention. But Neanderthal medical science is virtually nonexistent, the afflicted member does not usually survive, and the group moves on before modern humans find them.

Centuries of negative reinforcement have made Neanderthals adept at avoiding humans, in no small part due to painful

## CAMPER ABDUCTED BY CAVEMAN!

Ron Stewart, 24, had taken a week off from his grueling school schedule to rest and relax in the Appalachian Mountains. Little did he know that the toughest medical test of all awaited him -- delivering a caveman's baby!

"The male grabbed me right off the hiking trail, and the next thing I know, I'm delivering his wife's baby," said Stewart, a student at Penn State. Both mother and baby were doing fine when the cavemen released Stewart a week later.

But were they really primitive men? Or maybe just survivalists badly in need of a bath? "The woman wasn't like the man," Stewart told *The Inquirer*. "She spoke English, though she seemed to have a hard time remembering a lot of words. She told me her name, and this wasn't the first baby she'd had by the caveman. I hope she's all right," Stewart added.

The woman's family has asked *The Inquirer* not to print her name at this time, but did say that they are offering a \$200,000 reward for her safe return.

"I just want my daughter back," said the woman's father. "We thought she was dead, but finding this out -- that's worse."

## MARILYN CALLED ME ON MY CELL PHONE!

lessons about firearms

and machines . . . and mobs. They think of modern humans as aggressive, malevolent magicians who would happily kill and eat Neanderthals, given a chance.

But paradoxically, they also regard modern humans as somewhat stupid and weak. After all, the creatures are easily avoided, and most of them fall down quickly under a Neanderthal's hammering blows. But Neanderthals don't take this as license to murder modern humans whenever they please; they've seen enough mobs to understand the concept of strength in superior numbers.

Modern civilization has also missed them because Neanderthals do not leave their dead out in the open. They ritually devour much of the flesh, then bury the rest, whenever possible. To them, cannibalism is a special practice reserved only for family members. A Neanderthal considers it a great crime to share dead family with others, and a great tragedy to die without family to carry on the tradition.

The language of Neanderthals expresses only simple ideas: food, water, danger, safe, day, night, and so on. Most abstract concepts are foreign to them, though there is no reason they could not learn. Indeed, a modern human with the time and patience could eventually train a Neanderthal to behave like a civilized person, to speak a modern language, and to think and reason—assuming, of course, that the Neanderthal didn't





grow tired of the lessons and attempt to bludgeon its erstwhile instructor.

**Adventure Hook:** A medical student camping in the Appalachian Mountains encounters a Neanderthal, who batters him senseless. The student awakens in a deep ravine where there are two more beings: a woman and a child. The young man eventually realizes that the Neanderthal male wants him to tend to the woman, who is delivering another child and has developed complications. While helping her deliver the baby, the student abruptly realizes that the woman is speaking in broken English. She's apparently been abducted, to act as a mate, by the same creature that grabbed him.

Though he is able to learn the woman's name, he cannot communicate at all with the Neanderthal and so cannot convince it to let him take the woman and baby away—nor to allow him to escape. After repeated attempts to escape (with and without the woman), he one day wakes up to find them all gone.

He makes his way back to civilization and tells his tale to anyone who listens, even tracking down the woman's family, who had given her up for dead. He offers to lead an expedition to track down the Neanderthal and rescue the woman, and the family agrees. The heroes hear about the man's story when he advertises in a magazine for mercenaries—who will almost certainly kill the Neanderthal, and perhaps, accidentally, the woman and the children as well.

Should the heroes sign up for the expedition? Can they even find the Neanderthal again? And if so, are they willing to kill it to rescue the woman? Would she be able to reintegrate with modern society?

## Pterosaur

Cooper: Now, Mr. Reynolds, you say that a pterodactyl—a flying dinosaur—carried off your daughter, but you were too far away to do anything.

Reynolds: Yes. I was in front of the house, and I heard my daughter scream from the backyard.

Cooper: And you ran around back.

Reynolds: Yes. I saw them pick her up off the ground and start flying away. Southeast, toward the highway.

Cooper: How many were there?

Reynolds: Two. Maybe three. It was starting to get dark, so I couldn't see them too clearly. Anyway, I was too busy trying to find something to throw at them, make them drop my daughter.

Cooper: Do you own a gun, Mister Reynolds?

Reynolds: Why?

Cooper: It's just a question.

Reynolds: I'm not answering any more damned questions until I talk to my lawyer.

**Description:** The pterosaur is a flying reptile, a remnant of the mass extinction at the end of the Cretaceous period. Covered with a leathery hide, it stands almost 1.5 meters tall and has a wingspan of up to 6 meters. Its wings are membranous, like those of a bat, with indentations along the lines of cartilage. It has no neck to speak of, but possesses a large hump reminiscent of that of a camel at the back of its head.

A pterosaur's hide is featherless, and its coloration changes with where the beast is seen: in the southwest United States, the creature is always gray or black. In Zambia, it is red, and in Namibia, sightings describe it as black with white markings.

**Encounter:** Pterosaurs hunt much the same way pelicans do, gliding quietly a hundred meters above the ground, waiting for suitable prey to present itself. At that point, they swoop down to attack. After devouring the meal, a pterosaur takes to the sky again, lifting off effortlessly with only a flap or two of its wings.

Though pterosaurs ordinarily hunt only fish or small animals, they are capable of attacking humans. It takes a particularly

## Pterosaur Game Data

|                                       |         |                          |                    |
|---------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| STR 6                                 | (2d4+1) | INT 2                    | (Animal 8 or d4+6) |
| DEX 15                                | (d6+12) | WIL 13                   | (2d4+8)            |
| CON 6                                 | (d4+4)  | PER 2                    | (Animal 6 or d4+4) |
| Durability: 6/6/3/3                   |         | Action check: 15+/14/7/3 |                    |
| Move: run 8, walk 2, glide 24, fly 16 |         | #Actions: 2              |                    |
| Reaction score: Ordinary/2            |         |                          |                    |

### Attacks

|        |        |               |      |
|--------|--------|---------------|------|
| Beak   | 11/5/2 | d4s/d4w/d4+1w | LI/O |
| Talons | 14/7/3 | d4-1s/d4s/d4w | LI/O |

### Defenses

no resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +3 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 Armor: d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d4-1 (En)

### Skills

Unarmed [6]; Acrobatics [15]—*flight* [16]; Stealth [15]; Stamina [6]—*endurance* [10]; Awareness [13]—*perception* [14].



hungry—or nearsighted—pterosaur, but every so often one dives out of the sky at a person. Claws outstretched, it attempts to find purchase and pull the outsize prey into the air, to be dropped from a height and devoured at leisure. (Despite what fantasy-adventure movies depict, pterosaurs do not carry living victims back to their nests to feed their young—regurgitating the meat is easier.)

Pterosaurs actually spend most of their time in the air gliding, rather than flying, unlike bats (and most birds). Despite their batlike physique, pterosaurs have no qualms about landing on the ground, where they waddle or crawl slowly but without any particular difficulty. They also launch skyward again easily, especially in strong winds, by simply spreading their wings and catching the passing breeze.

Though the pterosaur's wings are powerful, they are not strong enough to carry off an adult human, so only children are in any danger. But the beast doesn't know this until it tries, and its talons and sharp beak can inflict considerable damage before it realizes it is outclassed and flies away. In Zambia, the pterosaur is known as *kongamato* ("the breaker of boats") after its tendency to attack small craft, perhaps mistaking them for fish.

**Habitat/Society:** The modern pterosaur inhabits areas with high places for it to roost—cliffs, tall trees, hills, and mountains. Though several pterosaurs will nest together—generally a family unit, though the pterosaurs aren't particularly choosy—they almost always hunt alone, soaring through the skies, watching the ground for prey.

Commonly a pterosaur targets fish or rodents and ignores larger game, which always puts up too much of a fight. There have been no reliable sightings of the creature in heavily settled areas—probably because viable game is too hard to find.

**Adventure Hook:** When a child's distraught parents claim that a giant bat carried off their daughter before their eyes, the story is discounted, and the parents are charged with murder. A wealthy man, the girl's father

offers a \$2 million reward if anyone can prove his story.

Amateur cryptozoologists come out of the woodwork, offering all sorts of "proof" that the parents are telling the truth. Other groups publicly decry the "sideshow" the reward has made of the child-murder investigation. The heroes, meanwhile, conduct their own research, discovering references to pterosaur sightings in the area over the last sixty years and mysterious pet disappearances for the last dozen. A large wooded wetlands about 75 kilometers away could be the likely home of a pterosaur, should any actually exist.

Are the parents lying? Did they murder their daughter and blame her disappearance on a local legend? Are there pterosaurs in the swamp? Can the heroes collect the reward money?







## Sauropod

A sauropod is a large, herbivorous dinosaur. *Diplodocus*, *Apatosaurus*, and *Brachiosaurus* all fall into the category of sauropods. Like most dinosaurs, they are presumed to have become extinct 65 million years ago. But sightings of mbielu-mbielu-mbielu in the Lake Tele region of the Congo and similar large creatures in Peru bear witness that nature often disagrees with science.

**Description:** Accounts of sauropods vary on specifics, but certain traits are common. A sauropod measures roughly 10 meters in length and weighs over 9,000 kilograms. The beast has a long neck and a small head, an extremely bulky body supported by stumpy legs, and a long tail. Its body is positioned above the legs, rather than between them (such as with crocodiles). Some have been described as having “planks growing out of its back” like a stegosaur. Its teeth are made for chewing rather than tearing, and the claws on its feet are short and blunt. The beast is usually grayish or greenish and often spattered with mud. The roars of a sauropod are often described as ear-shattering.

## Sauropod Game Data

|                                  |          |                          |                     |
|----------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| STR 21                           | (2d4+16) | INT 3                    | (Animal 9 or 2d4+4) |
| DEX 10                           | (2d4+5)  | WIL 8                    | (d4+6)              |
| CON 22                           | (2d4+17) | PER 3                    | (Animal 8 or d4+6)  |
| Durability: 22/22/11/11          |          | Action check: 12+/11/5/2 |                     |
| Move: sprint 34, run 25, walk 10 |          | #Actions: 3              |                     |
| Reaction score: Ordinary/2       |          |                          |                     |

### Attacks

|                |          |                 |      |
|----------------|----------|-----------------|------|
| Bite           | 21/10/5  | d6w/d6+1w/d4m   | LI/O |
| Claw           | 21/10/5  | d6s/d4+1w/d6w   | LI/O |
| Tail-lash      | 21/10/5* | d6+1s/d8+1s/d6w | LI/O |
| * +d6 base die |          |                 |      |

### Defenses

+5 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 no resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 Armor (Good): d4+1 (LI), d4+1 (HI), d4-1 (En)

### Skills

Unarmed [21]; Movement [22]—*swim* [23]; Stamina [22]—*endurance* [24]; Awareness [8]—*intuition* [10], *perception* [10]; Resolve [8]—*physical* [14].



**Encounter:** Sauropods attack because they feel threatened. They consider the close proximity of unfamiliar creatures, or even other sauropods, as threats. Because of their armor-plated hides, though, they don't consider most small-arms fire threatening—merely curious, or at most, annoying.

Unfortunately, the interest of a creature as large as a sauropod is often threatening to humans. Most obviously, it puts them in close proximity to an unfamiliar creature, which incites the sauropod to try to drive the intruder away with an aggressive display.

But if its stomping and tail-thrashing doesn't do the trick, the sauropod charges its foe in an attempt to knock it to the ground. This takedown maneuver is resolved as one attack, with a +2 step penalty. If the attack is successful, the opponent is knocked to the ground. If the opponent is still on the ground when the sauropod acts again, the sauropod follows up with a maul attack, using its short, heavy claws. Note that this attack gains a -2 bonus, because the target is prone.

The sauropod attacks with its tail only as an afterthought. If threatened from behind, it turns to face its attacker and in the process makes a tail-lash attack. (Hence the +d6 base die.) Note that it will turn to face the new foe even if it is already threatened from the front; this means that it performs the tail-lash attack against those foes in its next action, when it turns to face them again.

Sauropods usually only bite when they are in the water and cannot bring their legs to bear. They never swallow, however; sauropods lack the mouth and throat structure to chew or swallow anything larger than a trout. Still, the sauropod's bite can snap stout limbs in two, so being gnawed upon may be considerably worse than being eaten.

**Habitat/Society:** Sauropods nearly always make their homes within a short distance of large bodies of water. This is because sauropods are semiaquatic beasts; they spend a great deal of their time underwater, surfacing to draw breath only occasionally. They do most of their feeding in the water, though they are fond of a variety of nonaquatic plants and often travel for several kilometers to devour hundreds of square feet of flowers, berries, or grass.

Though herbivores, sauropods can be extremely dangerous. They are aggressively territorial when it comes to other sauropods, though they often completely ignore humans (until the humans get too close, that is). Kinori, on the other hand, can approach them with impunity, and frequently herd the beasts into subterranean chambers for unknown reasons. Sometimes the sauropods return, sometimes they do not.

# SOLDIERS! HUNTERS! WARRIORS!

ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY!

Well-financed collector seeks the best of the best for non-political expedition deep in-country.

Object: Live capture of world's largest prey.  
Degree of risk - rewards commensurate.

**Discretion vital.**  
Audition required.

BOX P2-33  
**SERIOUS INQUIRIES ONLY**

In the past, the kinori have used sauropods as heavy combat troops, either driving them into the ranks of their enemies or riding upon their backs. Curiously, the kinori seem particularly concerned when sauropods are injured—almost as concerned as when a blackscale kinori is hurt. The kinori hold sauropods in such esteem for reasons yet to be comprehended by human beings.

## **Adventure Hook:**

The heroes are assigned to infiltrate a mission to Cameroon, where a wealthy industrialist is mounting an expedition to capture a live mbielu-mbielu-mbielu.

Along with about twenty hunters, mercenaries, and photojournalists, the heroes travel up the Mainyu River, several times finding giant footprints, but never seeing the creature itself.

Near Mamfe Pool—best remembered among paranormals for a 1932 sighting of a gigantic river monster—the expedition finally sights a sauropod, and begins setting traps to capture it. After several near-misses—with the sauropod tearing through restraints, and the industrialist losing both men and patience—the heroes discover the true reason behind the expedition: the industrialist is a Freemason, intent on capturing a sauropod to harvest its eggs, which he then trades to the kinori for arcane knowledge.

Do the heroes stop his scheme? Or does it have any hope of succeeding anyway? Will the kinori themselves simply stand by and let a human take what they may actually consider rightfully theirs? And what exactly makes sauropod eggs valuable to the kinori?



# Extraterrestrials

Space is vast, and there are far more alien societies than could ever be cataloged, but only a few of them visit Earth regularly. The most common are described fully in the DARK•MATTER campaign setting: the Greys and their sasquatch servants, the shadow-wielding Men in Black, and perhaps the ekimmu. These certainly have more contact with humans than others, but there are still some infrequent visitors.

## Crawfordsville Monster

"The Crawfordsville Monster" is the common name for a creature that appeared in Crawfordsville, Indiana in 1891, and has not been observed since. However, the few dozen onlookers who observed the beast would have been surprised to learn that not only was it not the only one of its kind, but that when they saw it, it was not alone.

**Description:** Ordinarily, a creature of the species to which the Crawfordsville Monster belongs is transparent to the naked eye. Only after they have fed and their meal is almost completely digested do their bodies begin to display enough pigmentation for other creatures to see them—usually the pinkish-red hue of dissolving flesh.

When visible, the creatures appear rather like pale, giant bacilli bacteria, 6 meters long and 2.5 meters wide, with flipper-like pseudopodia they use for navigation. They have a nucleus (unlike actual bacteria) that, to some, appears to be a gigantic, red eye. When in distress, the creatures emit a wheezing, plaintive noise that can be heard for half a kilometer.

**Encounter:** Humans who encounter the creature rarely notice unless they are being attacked. The creatures' innate invisibility to ordinary vision provides a +4 step penalty to spot them, and the fact that they make very little noise provides a similar penalty to Awareness–*perception* checks to hear them. Infrared optics, on the other hand, receive a –2 step bonus, due to the way the creatures use heated air currents to change altitude.

Ordinarily, the creatures feed only on birds by consciously altering their pheromone output to attract them. Birds fly toward the scent and collide with the creature's flesh, becoming stuck. They are quickly absorbed and digested. But since the late 1990s, the creatures have been becoming more aggressive toward humans—perhaps because the threat of collision with airplanes makes hunting its traditional prey too dangerous.

The creature attacks by enveloping the victim. Unfortunately, the only way to escape such an attack—once the creature has its grip—is to hold one's breath and fight free,

because the creature expects some resistance from its meals and refuses to let go. Once the creature is certain of its meal, it retreats to the skies with the hapless victim still eerily suspended inside.

When one of these creatures dies, it leaves behind a pulpy, clear residue, comparable to the flesh of a jellyfish. This residue evaporates fairly quickly in sunlight or is washed away by rain. Reports of discolored jelly falling from the skies (the phenomenon of "pwdre ser" in 16th-century Wales, for example, and modern cases in Texas in 1979 and Tasmania in 1996) are sightings of the remains of these creatures.

**Habitat/Society:** The species to which the Crawfordsville Monster belongs have been on Earth since the end of the Mesozoic era. Having survived the various "extinction periods" that destroyed so many other species, the beasts led a fairly idyllic existence until man developed the airship. Until then, they had but to drift lazily through the sky, unseen by land-bound creatures and feeding on the birds that blundered into their reach.

With the advent of human air travel, though, the creatures are quickly dying out. The collisions with the drifting life forms do no real damage to most airplanes larger than a Piper Cub, but virtually disintegrate the creatures. Passengers aboard airborne vehicles perceive the impact as mere turbulence.

The species is close to extinction. Though they are capable of

## Crawfordsville Monster Game Data

|                                |         |                          |                     |
|--------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| STR 4                          | (d4+2)  | INT 4                    | (Animal 9 or 2d4+4) |
| DEX 12                         | (2d4+7) | WIL 14                   | (d4+12)             |
| CON 8                          | (2d4+3) | PER 4                    | (Animal 9 or 2d4+4) |
| Durability: 8/8/4/4            |         | Action check: 11+/10/5/2 |                     |
| Move: walk 1, fly 32, glide 16 |         | #Actions: 2              |                     |
| Reaction score: Marginal/1     |         |                          |                     |

### Attacks

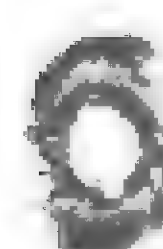
|        |        |               |      |
|--------|--------|---------------|------|
| Absorb | 10/5/2 | d4s/d4w/d4+2w | LI/0 |
|--------|--------|---------------|------|

### Defenses

–1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
Armor: d4–2 (LI), d4 (HI), d4–1 (En)

### Skills

Unarmed [4]; Stamina [8]–*endurance* [12]; Acrobatics [12]–*flight* [14], *zero-g training* [16]; Stealth [12]–*hide* [18]; Awareness [14]–*intuition* [16]; Investigate [14].





reproducing by symmetrical binary fission (another trait they share with bacteria), their death rate is considerably higher than their birth rate. Most of their offspring do not survive to maturity—victims of modern technology.

**Adventure Hook:** Tales begin springing up of “invisible monsters” carrying off campers and hikers in mountainous areas. The heroes are sent into the mountains to investigate and discover a campsite apparently abandoned for days, but with small clumps of a clear, jellylike substance scattered around.

While the jelly contains elements found on Earth, the com-

bination does not match any known terrestrial creature; the closest match is a Portuguese man-o'-war, which obviously has no place in the mountains.

The heroes linger for a few days in a fruitless search for the creature, occasionally encountering other campers, none of whom can offer much in the way of useful information. Just when the heroes are prepared to give up, though, a slow breeze moves through the woods near the camp, apparently pausing directly over the camp (without disturbing the campfire), before moving on. If the heroes decide to follow they lose the trail (unless they have infrared gear), but the creature returns later, this time attacking anyone out in the open.

Can the heroes fend off the creature? Is it the only one present? Or will they try to capture it—and how? And will the heroes



find themselves under surveillance by FBI agents who believe the deaths are the work of a serial killer?

## FBI SAYS MISSING CAMPERS WERE VICTIMS OF SERIAL KILLER

Three California residents who disappeared from their camps in the Sequoia National Park over the past month may have been the victims of a serial killer, warned an FBI report today.

According to an FBI spokesperson, “Though the FBI will be assisting in the efforts to locate this individual, hikers and campers are warned to stay clear of the Mount Whitney area.”

The three campers — Grace Blevins, 67, Homer Blevins, 72, and Lee Wyatt, 20 — vanished from two separate campsites in incidents just over two weeks apart. Their camps were untouched, though in the case of the Blevins family, a pistol found at the camp had apparently been fired. Investigators were unable to find any indication of injuries at the scene, however.

“What we’re dealing with here is someone who abducts his victims from their camps, and probably kills them elsewhere. That there’s no blood at the scene probably indicates that he’s just very good at hiding the evidence of his crimes. After this long, no one should take the lack of physical remains as an indication the victims might still be alive,” the FBI spokesperson said.

## Goblin

**Description:** The “goblin” is not a figure out of folklore but an alien visitor similar to the Greys. It stands 107 centimeters tall, with an oversized head and big floppy ears that come vaguely to a point. Its eyes are large and perfectly circular, positioned toward the sides of its face and closer to the ears than its nose, which consists of two short, narrow slits angled slightly downward in the center. Its eyes also glow, as does the rest of it—the result of a biological process that also provides a certain luminosity to its blood.

A goblin’s legs seem almost vestigial and appear to be used more to orient the creature than hold it upright. It generally propels itself using its arms and hands rather than legs and feet. Its fingers resemble talons more than anything else, though it generally doesn’t use them as weapons.

**Encounter:** Goblins and humans meet for one of two reasons: A goblin is doing business with humans, or a human has stumbled on the goblins doing business with other humans. Gone are the days when the crew of a goblin ship might approach humans openly in an attempt to establish communications and trade negotiations.

When on Earth, a goblin wears a body-fitting, silvery utility suit. The suit provides armor sufficient to protect the goblin from most kinds of damage. It also includes gravity-reduction strips, meant to facilitate loading and unloading heavy objects. These strips function exactly the same as a weight neutralizer. (See Chapter 9: Goods & Services in the *Player’s Handbook* for details.) The goblins have found many uses for these gravity strips, not the least of which is reducing their own personal weight so they can leap, climb, flip, and fall with ease.



While wearing this suit, a goblin can perform astounding physical feats, gaining a -1 step bonus on Athletics and Acrobatics skill checks, including Acrobatics-dodge.

Goblins rarely carry weapons. They are merchants, after all, and do not wish to intimidate potential customers. In hostile situations, they rely on their own agility and their worksuits to carry them out of harm's way. They are not averse to picking up and using the occasional weapon, but they prefer nonlethal items, or better yet, technological gadgets that obviate the need for violence altogether.

**Habitat/Society:** The goblins come from the same general area of space as the Greys, who were never aware of their existence before hearing of these visitors to Earth. Somewhat less advanced technologically than Greys, and having explored the universe in different directions, goblins took considerably longer to discover humankind.

Their first real contact was in Europe's Dark Ages, when they were mistaken for faerie creatures (though they were not the source of faerie legends). These initial encounters taught them that humans were volatile and aggressive, but slow. Their subsequent visit (in Kentucky, in 1955) illustrated that humans' aggression hadn't changed much, though their technology had. Humans now had firearms.

## Goblin Game Data

|                                 |         |                          |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|
| STR 7                           | (2d4+2) | INT 10                   | (2d4+5) |
| DEX 11                          | (2d4+6) | WIL 11                   | (d8+7)  |
| CON 6                           | (d8+2)  | PER 8                    | (2d4+3) |
| Durability: 6/6/3/3             |         | Action Check: 13+/12/6/3 |         |
| Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 |         | #Actions: 2              |         |
| Reaction Score: Ordinary/2      |         | Last resorts: 1          |         |

### Attacks

|                |       |               |      |
|----------------|-------|---------------|------|
| Unarmed*       | 3/1/0 | d4s/d4+1s/d4w | LI/O |
| * +d4 base die |       |               |      |

### Defenses

no resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 +1 resistance modifier vs. WIL encounter skills  
 Armor (Good): d6 (LI), d6+1 (HI), d4+1 (En)

### Skills

Armor Operation [7]; Athletics [7]; Acrobatics [11]-*dodge* [18], *zero-g* [12]; Stealth [11]; Vehicle [11]-*space* [14]; Movement [6]-*race* [7]; Stamina [6]-*endurance* [8]; Knowledge [10]-*computer* [12]; System Operation [10]; Awareness [11]-*perception* [12]; Investigate [11]; Lore [11]-*UFO* [14], *fringe science* [14]; Resolve [11]; Culture [8].



The goblins also discovered during their visits to Earth that the Greys had been there before them. Knowing of the Greys from countless other worlds, the goblins were keen to avoid them: Greys preached noninterference, while the goblins sought trade. For the space of a few decades during the 5th century, the goblins avoided Grey "blockade ships" (in reality, simply scout vessels) to bring technological innovations to the backward humans—most of which were lost through misuse or confiscated by the Greys. Their ships laden with minerals, ice, and radioactive ores, the goblins departed, intending to return when the Greys were more amenable to open communication and barter with the Earthlings.

When the goblins did finally return in the middle of the 20th century, they were stunned to see just how far the Greys had recanted from their policy of leaving humans to themselves. The skies of Earth were thick with alien vessels, and extradimensional species were once again harnessing the power of dark matter to reactivate and utilize gates between worlds.



The goblins eagerly approached a human outpost, prepared to trade, but their gestures of greeting were misinterpreted. The humans used their primitive slug-throwing weapons to drive off the alien envoys. After repeated attempts to communicate with the humans—whose language and customs had warped curiously in a mere fifteen hundred years—the goblins withdrew to reconsider their course of action.

Eventually, they realized that despite the heavy alien traffic, Earthlings were only dimly aware of the existence of extra-terrestrials. This was largely due to a treaty the Greys had formed with some human governments. What the goblins had suspected for so long was true: For all their talk of noninterference, the Greys didn't practice what they preached.

To the goblins, this was license to follow suit—albeit covertly, to avoid the attention of the Greys, and

carefully, to avoid being blasted to bits by ignorant humans. How to do so at first stumped them. Aliens regularly monitored Earth's communication networks, and landings were extremely risky now that the humans had not only firearms but also fast airships on which to mount them.

The answer came when humans "invented" computers, which led in a few short decades to the development of electronic networks. The goblins used electronic communication to first learn the language of humans, then to make a few innocuous overtures to Internet-oriented fringe groups. They were regular subscribers to the alt.alien.visitors newsgroup, and when "Pretty Good Privacy" encryption became available, the goblins began to openly correspond with those humans they felt could become clients.

Now they make periodic smuggling runs to Earth, bringing alien technology (some of it "liberated" from the Greys) and carrying away the mineral resources they value so much. So far, they have managed to escape the notice of the Greys, but they are prepared to depart Earth again should things become too hot.

**Adventure Hook:** A vanload of Silicon Valley technicians are arrested for trespassing in the San Luis Reservoir recreation area, and state troopers discover a mysterious, high-tech

device in the back of the vehicle. While the police try to sort out what the technicians were up to, mysterious men dressed in black suits arrive and confiscate the device. For the next several days, the area around the reservoir is inundated with reports of UFOs.

Released from incarceration on bail, the technicians begin receiving visitations—Men in Black, Greys, and even sandmen. At first they believe the heroes are MiBs but eventually reveal that they've actually been buying their "inventions" from alien tech-peddlers. And now that their cover has begun to unravel, the technicians are under surveillance by myriad groups intent on regulating—or terminating—their business relationship with their contacts, the goblins.

Do the heroes help or stop the technicians? Or do they undercut them, to acquire sophisticated xenotech from the goblins for themselves? And how do the other Stranger races react to their involvement?

## UFOs SIGHTED OVER SILICON VALLEY - AGAIN

LOS BANOS, CALIFORNIA (AP) - For the seventh night in a row, the skies over the technology capital of the world have been visited by flashing lights, roaring sounds, and mysterious dark shapes.

"This is proof of intelligent life," MUFON spokeswoman Gail Turner said in a telephone interview yesturday. "Aliens are trying to make contact with our best and brightest minds, and that means they have something important to tell us."

The government is not so optimistic, however. "These phenomena are manifestations of tectonic activity, which is very common in this state. Many people mistake these 'earth lights' for unidentified flying objects," said one government spokesman, who did not divulge his name. "If they were anything worth interest, your government would take appropriate action."

## Starchild

'Look: aliens abduct these women and artificially inseminate them. Nine months later, there's a bouncy baby mutant onboard the mothership. Then they send this thing through the alien equivalent of prep school, until it's ready to hop a shuttle for Harvard or Yale or Oxford—someplace where it'll blend in, complete with an exemplary high school record and a picture in the yearbook! Then it's six years of political science and business administration and the dean's list and 'I never inhaled' and everything. When they graduate—WHAM! They're snatched up by Microsoft or Lilly or the

freakin' 'Committee to Re-Elect,' and then we've got all these imitation people in the boardrooms and the factory floor and the House and the damned Senate! And if anybody should ever ask too many questions—ZAP! The alien mind rays turn the poor schmoe's brain to tapioca! The only reason it hasn't happened to me yet is I only talk to people I've known all my life! But it's real, man! These things are being maneuvered into place to facilitate some big alien invasion agenda, and we just keep electing them to public office!'



## Starchild Game Data

STR 8 (d8+4) INT 10 (d8+6)  
 DEX 9 (2d6+2) WIL 11 (d8+7)  
 CON 7 (d8+3) PER 9 (d12+3)  
 Durability: 7/7/4/4 Action check: 10+/9/4/2  
 Move: sprint 16, run 10, walk 4 #Actions: 2  
 Reaction score: Marginal/1 Last resorts: 1

### Attacks

Unarmed\* 4/2/1 d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s LI/O  
 \* +d4 base die

### Defenses

no resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 no resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 +1 resistance modifier vs. WIL encounter skills  
 -1 step bonus to CON feat checks to resist poisons

### Skills

Stamina [7]; Vehicle Operation [9]; Computer [10]—*programming* [11]; Knowledge [11]—*deduce* [12], *language (Grey)* [14]; Life Science [10]; System Operation [10]; Awareness [11]—*intuition* [12]; Resolve [11]—*mental* [12]; Deception [9]; Interaction [9].

### Psionic Skills

Telepathy [9]—*contact* [10], *suggest* [10].

'Bob, old buddy, you're all wound up over this. Maybe you should just get some sleep.'

'I don't know . . . maybe I should just get some sleep. . . .'

Some of the earliest tales of alien abduction—particularly of women—describe encounters with apparently ordinary human children aboard the alien vessels. Most of the abductees feel that these children are products of alien breeding experiments. Nearly all of the women who encounter these “star children” believe that those they meet are their own children, “harvested” from them during previous abductions. UFO experts occasionally suggest that these children are actually aliens, psychically disguised to appear human.

The bulk of these encounters occur during abductions by Greys, which coincides with the evidence that Greys conduct genetic engineering experiments on humans for a variety of purposes. These humans are abducted, genetically and virally “adjusted,” then released. Some are abducted multiple times, each time undergoing further steps in the same process.

Multiple abductees are often the children of multiple abductees, as though the Greys were monitoring the transmission of genetic material from one generation to the next. Given

that an ordinary-looking human with the psionic abilities of—and loyalty to—the Greys would make an outstanding business or world leader, perhaps the choice of abductees isn't anywhere near as random as UFOlogists believe.

**Description:** By design, the Grey-human hybrids known as “Starchildren” look no different from ordinary humans. (At least, those seen on Earth look no different.) However, medical reports occasionally escape suppression long enough to find their way into the hands of the cognoscenti—reports of lower-than-normal calcium production, increased lymphocyte production, and even abnormal combinations of short and long cones in the eye, literally altering visual perception to be more receptive of blues than reds. (Whether this is accidental or intentional is unknown.)

**Encounter:** The most current batch of Starchildren has been thoroughly trained to avoid confrontation with humans and especially world intelligence organizations. They accomplish this goal by appearing innocuous and cooperative—even commonplace. Consequently, a Starchild rarely uses its psionic skills with such agents—at least, until the Starchild is certain the agents in question won't be able to locate the source of a mental intrusion.

Once a Starchild is confident of using its psionic gifts without detection (and capture), it uses Telepathy—*suggestion* to avert conflict. Attackers are convinced they have the wrong target, detractors are reassured that the Starchild's assertions are logical and accurate, interviewers are moved to sympathy, and investigators are led to plausible (if incorrect) conclusions. Each Starchild's training among the Greys prepares him or her for nearly any eventuality and provides a suitable response.

**Habitat/Society:** Starchildren begin their lives as fetuses harvested from female abductees. Genetically altered to combine the best mental traits of Greys with the physical characteristics of humans, they gestate within small amniotic tanks aboard the Grey city-ships. Throughout, the Greys monitor their progress, seeking signs of physical abnormality and discarding those specimens that deviate too far outside the norm.

Once “born,” Starchildren undergo physical and mental development programs designed to cultivate the desired traits. Again, unacceptable candidates are discarded, while those who excel are rewarded with partial integration into Grey society, or, sometimes, visits with their original mothers. (Such visits are not staged for the benefit of the Starchild—the Greys are usually still harvesting genetic material from the same woman during the abduction when she is granted a few minutes with the child she never knew.)

The Starchildren who pass the criteria of the Greys are eventually allowed to attempt to enter human society. This itself is just another test to determine if a Starchild can pass as



an ordinary human. The Greys generally have little facility for simulating a lifetime among humans, even with all their psionic talents (notable exceptions such as [CENSORED] notwithstanding). And though the unpredictability of human behavior has claimed the lives of numerous Starchildren, the Greys deem each attempt a successful step toward their ultimate goal.

The ultimate goal, of course, is the creation of a Grey-friendly environment on Earth. For the Greys, it is not a question of

climatic conditions; atmospheric engineering could accomplish that within a few years. Rather, the Greys have for centuries observed the xenophobia that perpetually grips mankind; they realize that if a human cannot tolerate another human who speaks a different language, how can he tolerate a nonhuman who speaks no Earthly language?

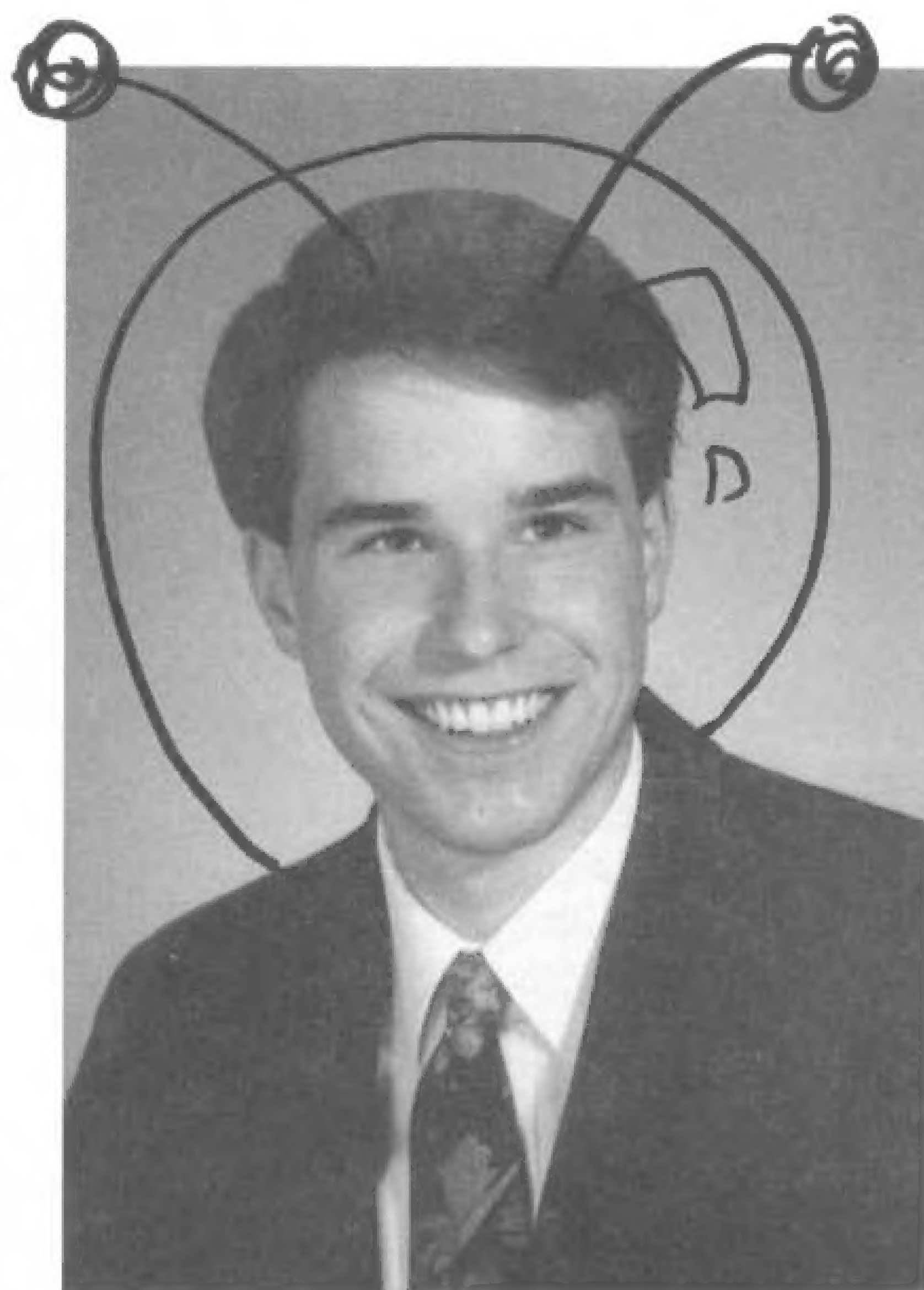
But a Starchild placed on Earth and given a false history as a human and the proper doctrine of a Grey—with the

## Christopher Murin

10011010... Brainiac... Eagle Scout... French master... always willing to help... knows pi to 100 decimal places ... "who are you talkin' to, anyway?"

Well, it's been fun. These were probably the longest four years of my life. It was worth the hard work. I think I've made "mom and pop" proud. I really don't have that much to say-- I'm saving that for my acceptance speeches. If you run into me on Capitol Hill, say hello!

*Chris*



42 Seniors

## Starchild Heroes

With the Gamemaster's strict permission, a player can choose the following Diplomat/Mindwalker career:

### Starchild

Genetically engineered, raised, and trained by the alien Greys, this hero has been returned to Earth as a quisling. The ultimate goal is to achieve an important public office, and to use that post to facilitate the acceptance and integration of Greys into Earth culture when the time is right.

But for reasons unknown to the hero, she has lost contact with the Greys. For the first time in her life, she is alone with her thoughts, finally able to make decisions for herself—perhaps even to reject the values of her foster species and to embrace life as a human.

aid of with his or her considerable psionic talents—could easily assume a position of power in human society: financier, corporate officer, CEO, government advisor, president, ruler. With enough such Starchildren in place, the appearance of gray-skinned aliens could be presented in a positive light, the psychologically and sociologically traumatized population carefully managed into acquiescence—even submission.

Starchildren working in the public view should concentrate on Interaction and Administration skills, with perhaps a smattering of Culture skills. Those engaged in infiltration of paranormal investigation agencies—such as most heroes—should also develop their psionic skills, to better pass as ordinary psychics; ESP is a good choice. Deception-*bluff* is a must for any Starchild, as is Resolve-*mental*.

**Signature Equipment:** Laptop computer or crystal ball, cellular telephone or crystals, "cover" items such as self-empowerment books, corporate or political management guides, or "new age" paraphernalia.

**Skill Package:** Knowledge-*computer operation*; Awareness-*perception*; Resolve; Deception; Telepathy-*contact, suggest*. Cost: 23 points.


**Suggested Perks:** Hidden Identity, Psionic Awareness.

**Suggested Flaws:** Divided Loyalty, Implants, Powerful Enemy.



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